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VOL. 43.

SPINOZA BY BERTHOLD AUERBACH.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



**TAUCHNITZ EDITION.**

**By the same Author,**

**ON THE HEIGHTS . . . . . 3 vols.**

**BRIGITTA . . . . . 1 vol.**

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# S P I N O Z A

A N O V E L.

BY

BERTHOLD AUERBACH,  
AUTHOR OF "ON THE HEIGHTS," ETC.

FROM THE GERMAN BY

E. NICHOLSON.

*Authorized Edition.*

IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. II.

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# S P I N O Z A.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE NEW ALLY.

OLYMPIA sat at the window and looked in the window seat mirror, the so called "Spy," a standing evidence of Dutch love of comfort and sightseeing. A young man stood by the lady. He was of middle height, his oval face, when seen in profile, might have been called handsome, it had some resemblance to Olympia's, but there was none of the restless fire in his glance that shone from Olympia's eyes. His left hand rested on the gilt handle of his rapier, and with his right he stroked his blonde whiskers; every now and then he screwed up his eyes, and looked out of the corners at every point in his

costume: it was all faultless; the white cravat was in its proper position, the black mantle of finest Venetian velvet fell in majestic folds, and the tassel of gold-thread hung gracefully on his breast, the quilted satin breeches were tied ornamentally at the knees, the silk stockings and shoes with gold buckles, all were irreproachable. "Look there," said Olympia, and the well-dressed individual looked at her amiably, "do you see that young man who is coming so thoughtfully down the street?"

The person addressed quickly drew a red morocco case from his pocket, and took a jewelled opera glass from it.

"Do you mean that one?" he then said, "he is of middle height and brown complexion; is he not a Jew?"

"Whatever he is," replied Olympia, "he comes of an honourable Spanish family. My father respects him highly, and I—I consider him one of my dearest friends. Just because he was born a Jew, whom the whole world is against, he has attained to an unprejudiced conscientiousness of judgment,

an unswerving rectitude, which command our regard, and often put us to shame.”

“But what do you say to my physiognomical guess?” continued the stranger as he curled his moustache round his first finger, and let his glance wander complacently to the window-glass in which he saw himself reflected. “I too find the Jews very interesting, they are a sort of historical relic; and I have to thank you for my taste for history. I look upon the Jews as a fragment of some Asiatic root, which we can study in this strange form.”

“Had you much intercourse with Jews in Hamburg?” enquired Olympia.

“You jest!” was the reply, “but I know the Jews thoroughly. *En détail*, there may be many honourable men among them. In my native town there was an old rogue to whom I used to sell my old clothes; I had many a joke with him, he took everything in good part, if he could make a good bargain; covetous as he was, I have still seen several instances of his uprightness; but looked at *en gros* all Jews are pickpockets, a dirty, disgusting lot, who alas! my father has often said will soon have all



the trade of our town to themselves. Only think, I had a friend staying with me once, who actually condescended to a noble passion for a Jewess, so much so indeed, that he actually thought of uniting himself to his Rachel. I cannot yet understand how a man of honourable family could bear to have a dirty Jew for a brother-in-law, smelling of leeks. But the maiden appears to have been educated above her greasy locked compatriots. One morning my friend was in Cuxhaven when they were dragging a corpse out of the water, he recognised it as Rachel; we had to hold him, to prevent him from doing himself a mischief. I was right sorry for my friend's trouble, he swore hard and fast that he would never belong to another, but one knows what those vows are: he recovered sooner than we expected; and in a year he was the happy spouse of a town councillor's daughter. When we remind him of his earlier passion, he only laughs quietly:—surely, Jufrow Olympia either jests or plays with paradoxes when she honours a Jew with the enviable title of her best friend.”

During this discourse Olympia had placed her-

self at the organ, and lightly played a prelude; she looked quietly at the stranger, who emphasised his words, and beat time with his thumb and finger, which he had passed through a ring.

"You have gained much experience of life," she said at last, "but you forget, that you are in Holland, where religions are not divided into dominant and subordinate. I believe Amsterdam is the only town in the world which has carried toleration so far that Christians have been converted to Judaism. You must be acquainted with de Spinoza; believe me, he is a remarkable man. You are not ill-natured, be friendly with him for my sake; but hush! here he comes."

Spinoza entered.

"Here is Herr Kerkering at last," said Olympia, "of whom I have often spoken to you as my pupil of years ago, and who was prevented from returning to us by his father's death."

"You will assuredly approve of my resolution, Herr de Spinoza," interrupted Kerkering, "to return again to Jufrow Olympia, and hear the wisdom of the ancients from her honied lips."

"A questionable compliment," replied Olympia, "you say I have yellow lips, and remind me of my age." Kerkering protested, Spinoza helped him out by saying:

"You have probably forgotten, Herr Kerkering, that Jufrow Olympia demands like the highest Being, that we should make no image of her of things heavenly or earthly."

"O you heretic!" said Olympia, and her flashing eyes seemed indeed capable of an auto-da-fé. "You will surely permit Herr Kerkering," she continued after a pause, "to join our Latin conversations, I cannot call them lessons now."

Spinoza agreed, and while he was speaking Oldenburg entered. He looked Kerkering over, as Olympia introduced him, with a rapid glance.

"I thought I should meet thee here," he said turning to Spinoza, "and so spared myself the journey to thy house."

"Thou?" said Olympia, "O the cordial *thou!* how lucky men are that they can address their friends so when they please without hesitation. The Romans little knew their good fortune in addressing

each other as thou.. I am proud that you two are already so intimate, as I was the means of it."

"If two quantities are equal to a third then the three are equal," jested Spinoza.

"And not a fourth also?" enquired Olympia. "We are here the representatives of four great powers, we will conclude a quadruple alliance. You must represent Moses, Herr von Spinoza, you Calvin, Herr Oldenburg, Herr Kerkerling, you must stand up for your Luther, and I—I will represent the Pope; he cannot object, for I am called Olympia Maria Honoria. Herr Kerkerling give the two gentlemen your hands, we have long been allies; we four will represent the circle which includes and reconciles all religious differences."

"I am afraid that is the reverse problem of the squaring of the circle," said Oldenburg as he joined them, and added "You go even further than Hugo Grotius, who also dreamed of an eternal Peace of the Religions, but forgot the Jews in his projected union."

Olympia took Kerkerling's hands and placed them in the hands of the two friends.

"Always extravagant and arbitrary!" said Olden-

burg to Spinoza, as they went away. "Women never can resist match-making; if they are married, they try to find similar good fortune for others, if they have one friend, another must be his friend also, even if by force. What has this Kerkerling, whom she treats like an automaton, to do with us?"

"You should not be so discontented with such alliances," replied Spinoza, "it is another example for your Lord and Master, Descartes: Without the perpetual external interference of a higher third element no real existence can be imagined, all would fall to pieces."

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## CHAPTER II.

## HANDICRAFT.

WHILE Spinoza was absorbed in consideration of the actual existence of things, the inherent cause of their existence, their necessary and accidental destinies, and the appropriate mathematical demonstrations of Descartes, his father had also been considering the sufficient cause of actual existence, and his demonstrations were not less founded on ciphers and numbers than the philosopher's.

"Are you still resolved not to be a Rabbi?" he said one day to his son. "Have you thought over all the consequences to both you and me? I, alas! see my greatest joy sink before me into the grave."

"In the sayings of the Fathers it is written," answered Baruch in a low voice, "that Rabbi Zadok said: 'Make not a crown of glory of thy knowledge of the sacred law to pride thyself thereon, neither make a spade thereof wherewith to dig?' It always

goes ill with a religion if its expounders earn wages thereby."

"Good, I am of Rabbi Zadok's opinion; but what if a man hath no other spade? Listen to me, I will be open with you: Our Miriam is now the betrothed of Samuel Casseres; he wishes, with Rebecca's husband, to enlarge the diamond mill, he has fresh secrets; my daughters are now, with God's help, taken care of, you alone remain. Should I have concealments from you? My law-suit is going against me, and what I have to leave you at my death is so little, that you could not live on it. May God preserve my children and my children's children from saying with sorrow in their daily prayers: 'Lord let us not be bounden to them of flesh and blood for alms!' So tell me what is to be done?"

"Must I go into trade?"

"No, I should never agree to that, from childhood up you have had no inclination for trade. Now, indeed, there are new channels for commerce, and we need not be so confined as we are in Holland here, where each one snaps the opportunity

from before the other's face. There is no use in going to Batavia, for it goes so ill with those that are there that many wish to return; but there is a report that Rabbi Manasseh Ben Israel, who is treating with the Lord Protector, may probably obtain leave for the Jews to go to England again."

"I heard of it," answered Baruch. "Rabbi Manasseh won most votes by saying, that the true coming of the Messiah could not be until the fulfilment of the prophecy that the Jews would be scattered through all lands. It was a sophistical trick."

"That may be," said his father, "the greater proportion of people cannot be treated any other way than by being duped, so we do them that favour; but that is not what concerns us; consider how you are to ensure a livelihood in the future."

"Rabbi Gamaliel teaches that, 'Study of the Law united with a trade is good, diligence in both causes us to forget sin; study without work is idleness, and leads to sin.'" Baruch then gave several examples of fathers of the Synagogue who were handicraftsmen, and concluded with the words: "I should like to learn a handicraft."



"You need not quote the Talmud so much for it; I have nothing against your learning an honourable craft."

Spinoza was glad that his father was not merely moved by his examples to agree to his purpose, for he had in a measure thereby lent himself to well known "pious deceptions." He was firmly resolved never to join in the usual routine, and sell his knowledge and convictions for daily bread. If he could earn his livelihood by the labour of his hands, his convictions would remain free from the necessities and constraints of everyday life. Or even to minds of the first order does that vague unsatisfied longing occur, which so often comes over us if we are fated always and always to drive the pen, to inspire dead words, and dig out and chisel new thoughts and feelings. Do they feel that irresistible need for physical exercise to restore the overstrained nerve power?

Our young friend found plentiful consideration in the decision as to what handicraft he would devote himself to. He now remembered how often he had stood near the diamond mill, and watched

the horses in the lower storey as they turned the wheel that set in motion the machinery in the mill above. The polishing and cutting of diamonds was the secret of his co-religionists, an attraction for the boy, as well as the knowledge freely entrusted to him, that diamonds could only be cut and polished with diamond dust. How often, on his way to the Talmud school or Magister Nigritius, had he stood in self-forgetfulness at the open doors or windows of the workshops, while the men inside pursued their trade. The boy's eyes had been fascinated by this handicraft, and a longing for similar work possessed his mind. Now for the first time the knowledge flashed upon him that, what we call a free decision, is really only the result of past influences, often generating again its own scarcely perceptible results. He paused but little to consider this fleeting thought, for his imagination dwelt on the numerous workshops wherein the powers of man build up and mould the results of nature into new shapes. Only he who reforms and controls the materials of life has received true life. What a thousandfold blessing lies in work itself, as well

as in its results. One hand clasps the other, and one thought runs into another in the imagination of its effects. The whole activity of man forms one immense fraternal workshop. Here too, however, one individual has forcibly separated from another, and as the churches had done in the kingdom of thought and feeling, so had the guilds in the handicrafts of their chosen companies. There was no legal prohibition excluding the Jews from any trade, but custom and convenience made the guild-masters exclusive and reluctant.

Again it was Descartes from whom Spinoza received the decisive impulse towards his object. Spinoza was studying the "Dioptrika" of Descartes, and there learnt for the first time the law of refraction, and the first correct explanation of the rainbow. The objection raised by Huyghens, and universally shared, that Descartes had taken the law from the manuscript of Snellius, then widely circulated through Holland, and had learned the explanation of the rainbow from Antonio de Dominis and Kepler without acknowledging either, all this appeared trivial to our young enquirer; but it

disturbed him to think that deception should exist even in the domain of intellect. The otherwise enigmatical saying of the Talmud: "Whoever reveals a word or thought in the name of its author, he brings salvation to the world," now appeared to him a law of truth.

This proceeding of Descartes, if inexcusable, was still explicable in that he was accustomed as a courtier to find himself with easy adaptability among the strange and objective, and to regard it easily as his own and subjective.

It was with pure enthusiasm that the determination took firm hold of Spinoza to owe his livelihood solely to his own activity, to owe it to no inheritance, and in the same manner to find the truth by his own intellect.

One day Spinoza explained to his father, that he wished to learn the art of making optical glasses.

"But that is a trade that barely feeds a man," replied his father, "how can you support a family on it? Or do you intend our honourable name to die out with you?"

Spinoza did not answer this remonstrance immediately; perhaps he hoped and expected to perpetuate the name in another manner; he had touched a painful chord in his father's mind, and while explaining his inclination for independence he remarked that a Rabbi, by his salary, as well as by grateful offerings, was but a servant of individuals. Mingled melancholy and pride was on the face of the father at this statement, he nodded assentingly. The old Spaniard recognised in his son the same proud spirit which was not yet dead in himself. If a man cannot win from society respect and power, it is as well to avoid it, and in seclusion lose all care for it. So it seemed to the father; and again we see the loosened foundations and singular mixture of circumstances that awoke the powers of Spinoza to their full bloom.

"As far as I am concerned," the father agreed at last, "having thought over all the trades, I can think of none better if one has no great capital."

Father and son went to the skilful and well-known master, Christian Huyghens, an uncle of the mathematical scholar of that name, but who seemed

to have neither the poetical genius of his brother, nor that of his nephew.

Spinoza explained to the master in the course of conversation, that he already knew the laws of optics, and had also considerable acquaintance with mathematics; he then enquired if it were possible to learn the handy-work in half a year. The master, who, till then, had listened quietly to all remarks, sprang up at this so violently that his spectacles dropped from his nose.

"The deuce you can—may I turn Catholic, what maggots the youth of this day have in their heads?" he cried, "I have been seven and forty years in the business, and I may say I understand it, and can teach it to others, but I have people in the workshop who have already been five and seven years at it, and if I lay a microscope down there, may I eat it as it stands, if any one of them can put it together as it ought to be. You think you can learn everything out of books; I would not give a snap for all your histories; paper is patient, and lets you print what you like on it. I once tried to make a microscope after a description as it stood in the book, but it

was good for nothing. Whoever is not in the business himself, will never know as long as he lives how to bring the right focus into the glass. Go away with your learned disquisitions!" The master's wife came in, she had the pincers in her hand, and flourished the instrument violently.

"Yes," she cried, "if they could only learn how in a trice, every ignoramus would come here and turn optician in less than no time."

It was no little trouble to pacify the good folks again.

"I am a man like a lamb," then said the master; "if you cannot get on with me, you will never get on with any one in this world."

"Yes, he is only too good to the people," interrupted his wife, "and what he wastes on other people, I have to make tip for."

"Never mind," said the master, "you take good care of yourself; but I will be honest with you, you shall not have it to say later that I kept anything back from you. In the first place, it is an unhealthy trade; look at me, see what I am, I have already

swallowed more than three hundredweight of glass, I know I shall not last much longer. God's will be done!"

"Don't belie yourself, Christian," interrupted his wife, "if one is as strong as that in the sixties, and for three years has not paid the doctor or the apothecary a farthing, I think one may thank God. You must not believe all he says."

"Let me speak, I know what I am saying," retorted the Master, trying to give himself an air of importance; he first clasped his little finger round the ring-finger of his left hand, then said: "Secondly it is a poor trade, you get nothing by it."

"Yes, yes, he is right there," commented his wife. "When we began business, we, and the late Greenwood, who lived by the Town Hall that is burnt down, were the only two, and there are twenty-three in the town now; we hardly earn water enough for soup, and the worst of it is we cannot for shame give up the business. We are two old people, and do not need much; with scraping and saving we manage to pull through, so that at the end of the year we still keep our things together; I don't



know how folks get on with a house full of children, living on scanty wages."

His father, moved by these representations, would have retracted his consent, but Spinoza stood firm; so they came to an agreement with the master, that, for a moderate premium, Spinoza should learn as long from him as he pleased.

Such was the wholly new atmosphere, one filled with the smell of pitch and glass dust, into which Spinoza now entered. Henceforward he spent the greater part of the day in the workshop. He learnt to handle the sharp diamond set in one leg of a compass, to cut pieces of a certain size out of panes, the pieces still keeping their crystal facets when split. Spinoza then entered on the first grade of the honourable art of polishing. The cut piece was fixed on a vice with pitch, this fixed to a lever, and a wheel worked with the right foot. A strap was fastened round this and to a roller, on which was fixed a perfectly smooth plate of lead. The plate turned, and with the left hand the fragment of glass was pressed against it, thus inscribing successive circles on it until the glass received the

required form. Wet sand must be continually scattered over it to avoid setting the hard material on fire by friction, and to increase the roughness of the lead. The first stage was then finished. Spinoza would have preferred a less troublesome, and, above all, a cleaner handicraft; but it was just these additions to his work which became his intellectual means to further penetration of the laws of existence. Men are much inclined to regard apparently rough and repulsive labours as inferior; Spinoza accustomed himself to regard the circumstances of life, not according to their popular estimation, but on the essential grounds of their existence. The work is but unclean from one point of view; while engaged in it the workman is covered with dust, and sand, but its aim is the highest degree of purity and cleanliness. At the second stage it was decided whether the smooth glass was to receive a concave or a convex form, and a concave or convex brass-plate accordingly fixed on the cylinder; a screw was fixed alternately on either glass with pitch, and this by means of a peg turned round on the brass-plate, on which the same movement as in

the first stage was employed. Meanwhile the fine sand, now ground to polishing dust, must be spread on the plate by means of a brush, and water from the tin can near spurted out of the mouth on to the plate. After the two sides were so prepared, the third stage was proceeded to; the brass-plate was made hot, a drilled hole on the wrong side smeared with cement, covered on the right side with so-called *caput mortuum* (oxyde of iron), water being still sprinkled continually on it, and the glass thus polished. The glass having passed through the three stages of cutting, smoothing, and polishing, so that neither crack nor flaw was discoverable, was perfect.

Spinoza soon mastered the mechanical difficulties, and the first glass that he perfected without extraneous aid from its roughest state to the satisfaction of the master made his eyes light up with pleasure. The sight of the perfected work was a double gratification; gratification that the raw material was perfected to its end, and gratification to the mind of the workman that the raw material bore the impress of his will.

He understood the mathematical calculation of the glasses and their combination sooner than the master had expected. The books must have contained something more than mere nonsense.

While Spinoza chipped glasses for the short and weak-sighted, to bring the distant near, and the near nearer, he worked out in his mind the finest optical problems to clear and strengthen the mind's eyes of his contemporaries and successors. He was glad that the continual whirring allowed but short intervals of intercourse with his comrades; he could thus follow his own thoughts undisturbed.

There was one merry fellow in the workshop, with finely cut, handsome features, and rough, curly brown hair; he always sang and laughed as he pushed the door open, for he went on crutches, having club feet. While he placed his crutches near, and, rolling his shirt-sleeves up, put his lathe in order, he worked it in a way of his own with his knees; he regularly treated his fellow-workmen to a speech. Once he said: "Am I not better off than King Nebuchadnezzar? He, I believe, had earthen feet, and could never have stumbled over

our bad pavements. I have pulled the arms out of a tree, and made myself feet thereof; the next time an eagle flies between my legs, I will pull his wings out, and sew them on me; I have a right to ask wings from our Lord God; why has he given me feet I cannot use? Brethren, it would' be all up then, you might keep St. Monday five days in the week, you would want no more telescopes. Does any learned gentleman want to know what' a star looks like? Here I am, Mr. Peter Blyning, at your service, for a good tip I will fly up and spy it all out for you. Perhaps I might stay up there, and come down no more; if a pretty moon maiden would marry me I should be quite willing, down here I must die a bachelor."

A peal of laughter always followed his words, and he took every opportunity of treating them to his oratory.

"After all, as things are, we are all crutch makers what our Lord and God has bungled over, we have to set to rights; if he had stuck better eyes in the folks we need have no telescopes and no spectacles. May God forgive me, but I am often right down

angry with him. What have I done to him, that he should send me into the world half made? If he does not give me better feet up there he may keep his eternal life to himself, I'll none of it."

They all stared at him with blank faces when he spoke like this. Spinoza alone tried to show him that physical pains and imperfections are not real evils; and that it is a man's highest vocation to lead well the life God has allotted to him, and not to pine for powers denied to us by nature, for in so doing we shall never attain to true peace of mind.

"Yes, you have spoken well," said Peter, and his voice had a melancholy tremble in its tones, "you have spoken well, but do I demand more than belongs to me by right as a man? Look here, if but for once in my life I could dance, I swear I should be ready to go to my grave in peace. When I hear dance-music, nay, even now this moment, when I only think of it, I think I could jump out of my skin with rage; I could tear my eyes out, and shame on me; but I have drunk myself often enough blind drunk, because I was afraid the people all the while might see me crying.

Spinoza strove to soothe Peter; he won his good will, so that he was occasionally shown how to handle his work by him, but our philosopher in the midst of his discourse was often aware, how infinitely difficult it is to descend from the heights of ideal generalities to daily needs and the questions of ordinary men.

The rumour spread through the workshop that Spinoza was a great scholar, his companions were proud of their apprentice, and boasted of him in the ale-house; but in their behaviour to Spinoza himself, they gave him plainly to understand that he was only a Jew, and took certain airs of superior birth and familiar condescension with regard to him. Conquering all sensitiveness Spinoza only noticed the latter, and his gentle yet self-possessed manner turned off all rudeness; his companions soon acquired a certain half unwilling respect for Spinoza. A short impressive sentence spoken by him often worked long in the minds of those who heard it. Master Huyghens, and his wife-too, soon became fond of the modest quiet young man. These were not shepherds and fishermen, not men of

simple life in continual intercourse with eternal nature, with whom he could live like the wise of old, enriching and widening his own intelligence. It was a world whose activity lay far from aboriginal simplicity; whose inhabitants spent their days in every imaginable noise; on whose minds even on holidays it was difficult to impress a word. But by the rushing brook, or the whirring wheel, the souls of men are as alike as the winds that carry the different waves of sound, and the priesthood that serves the eternal laws must be perpetually renewed. As in Nature each plant shoots upwards, it lives for itself alone, and yet to the minds of men it seems to open and close with the greatest uniformity: so the activity of mankind is divided into different callings, each man being devoted to one in particular, and striving to fulfil it; but to the thinking mind all are united in the working of one great machine. Spinoza felt especially glad to stand in the ranks of those who earn their daily bread by the labour of their hands. For all thus engaged quietly fulfil the requirements of the law of their nature. Work is the attribute of man; he fulfils the



law in employing himself of his own free will; and it is a great and glorious chorus that comprises all the teaching and writing, the hammering and digging, the drilling and boiling in the individual workshops of the universe, and what results therefrom. The quiet life of Nature is mere existence; Intelligence is thought; Work is existence and thought united.

Spinoza was sociable, gay, and contented.

Not so Olympia when he described his new way of life to her.

"I am glad we agree in one thing," she said, "that to spend the livelong day in brooding over the thought of others, is either too much or too little work; so much so that it becomes tiresome to me, and I am glad to count my stitches again. When I am sewing, my best thoughts come. Do you see that garland of roses? Legends, as foolish and extravagant as those of the *Gesta Romanorum*, are imprisoned in those stitches—ah! how glad I was then, that I knew some handicraft."

"But I do not work merely to do something

with my hands, but to give my teeth something to chew."

"I have noticed for a long time," replied Olympia, "that reading Tacitus has made you quite humorous."

"I was not aware of it, but I am in sober earnest, that, for the future, I must earn my own livelihood."

"What did you acquire so much learning for then? Not for mere vanity, I hope? My father will enlarge his Institute, and you shall be a head-master in it; will you not be my colleague?"

"I am sorry to say, No. You may call it egotism, but my first duties are to myself, and I must first be clear of these; then, if I can teach anything that would be of service to mankind, I will think of it, but neither now, nor ever, will I sell the smallest of my convictions for material good."

"You always appear like a *Deus ex machina*," said Olympia to Oldenburg, as he entered. "Do you know that your god-child is preparing to be a master-craftsman?"

"An apostle to all lands, rather you would say," replied Oldenburg.

"If it were only some pursuit," continued Olympia, "such as the learned men and statesmen of old times followed, like agriculture, I should not have minded so much; there was something great in making extremes meet, and doing with the most cultivated minds the work of the rudest aborigenes; even fishing and carpentering have something poetical in them; but to polish glass in an obscure room, cramps and stupefies body and soul. It sets my teeth on edge to think of glass polishing. The hand of a philosopher turning the wheel of a machine, and employed in stupid manufacture; it is too repulsive a thought!"

"Do not abuse handicraft," replied Spinoza earnestly, "it is a privilege of humanity. The beasts have only their instinctive faculties of work, to build their nests, obtain their nourishment, to attack and to defend; mankind has made the external productions of nature his limbs; if he wants the flight of birds, the speed of deer, arrow<sup>6</sup> and ball will overtake either; his hands can with difficulty dig up

the earth, he melts iron and points it as hatchet or plough, yokes the strength of beasts to it, and carves and shapes both wood and stone. The peaceful crafts of shaping and building are the noblest inheritance of mankind, are sacred traditions. Whoever leaves an improved tool to posterity, gives a helping hand, and here a thousand immortal minds work on in obscurity. If I could in thought or deed invent something that would serve men after me in the enlightenment and beautifying of life, I should be happy; but never must we forget that all that is so handed down is but a tool for our own formation."

"That is all very fine and witty," said Olympia, womanlike seizing one thought out of the whole to reply to; "every one can think that, without being an artisan himself. Why should you work with sacred axes, sacred hatchets, and sacred files?"

"Because, to answer in your own way, I am cumbered with a sacred body, that requires food; and with the handicraft I have chosen, I will demonstrate the whole theory of dialectics to you: Two concave glasses laid on one another, show the

object at which you look through them upside down, the reflecting glass between brings it again into its right position."

"When were you born?" interrupted Oldenburg.

"A strange question, Sir Godfather", replied Spinoza, "if you do not yet know, in November of the year 1632."

"That is excellent," continued Oldenburg, "did you never hear of the Görlitz Apostle who raved in perpetual apostolic ecstasies? On November 24, he departed this life, he was by trade an honourable shoemaker, and I will show you from the Apocalypse that, seven years after his death, a new philosopher must be born, also a handicraftsman."

"Your comparison limps," said Olympia, "for your Jacob Böhme was a shoemaker, and became a philosopher, while our Maledict, from a philosopher, became a handicraftsman."

"Excuse me," said Spinoza, "the jest does not limp, but has a leg too many, for there are eight years between 24 and 32."

"That does not matter," answered Oldenburg, "if you amputate a year. But in truth and earnest,

you offend your friends by the aim to which you are devoting your life; it is so clearly as to me that I can not only speak before our friend, but before every one. Have you not declared to me yourself, that among friends everything is in common? Are we so ethereal that we can only exchange words and feelings, and not clinking gold?"

"I know your generous heart, and you know I thereby thank you," replied Spinoza, "but I have already told you that I will never receive a gift from a friend, as long as I can work for my living with my hands."

Spinoza was not to be dissuaded from diligently following his trade.

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## CHAPTER III.

## THE UNEXPRESSED.

"How do you like Kerkering?" enquired Olympia one day when he did not come to the lesson.

"As you do," retorted Spinoza.

"You build too much on our habit of taking the words out of each others mouths;" answered Olympia, "what fault do you find with him?"

Spinoza flushed red at having to answer this, partly because he had silently extended similar blame to Olympia, partly because he feared Olympia might misconstrue his words as jealousy. These contradictory thoughts flashed through his mind in a second, and after a short pause Olympia continued:

"Kerkering is thoroughly good-hearted, his loquacity is the national failing of the Hanseatic towns of Germany."

"Now I see," replied Spinoza, "that the Jews are not alone in having the fate to be judged in a

body by the first and best individual that chance throws in the way. But consider the self-possession and calm judgment of ethical subjects that characterise our friend Oldenburg, why not take him as a type of the Hanseatic townsmen?"

"You are right," replied Olympia, "but you make such progress with me that I shall never allow myself to judge in future, I am too easily influenced by surrounding circumstances, and you comprehend the general view so acutely."

"Do not call it masculine vanity," responded Spinoza; "but you confirm what I have observed with my sisters and their friends; women seldom seem to feel pleasure in mere rectitude, they do not judge of the deed but the doer, and of him with either partiality or prejudice."

"Agreed. Well, we are not in the world to philosophise. You agree with me there; you, too, do not like this jingling prattle, with its cut and dried ready-coined thoughts; if these pennies are always in circulation, they become worn out, lose all freshness in the impression, and retain only nominal



value. So it is with Kerkering, he is wanting in true inner worth."

"He has his compensations," said Spinoza, "he has all the more jingle."

Olympia seemed to have no inclination to pursue this turn of the conversation, for she continued with her eyes sparkling strangely:

"Our friend Oldenburg always wants me to try my hand at poetry like my namesake Olympia Morata, but I must confess that I pity poets almost as much as I respect them, because they both can and must lay bare their deepest feelings to the eyes of the whole world. It seems to me that if I were to express to the world my inner life, what constitutes the core of my being, I should no longer be my own; the world would have me, I should remain but a shadow of what I had resigned, and must suddenly vanish away. So I prefer the ancient philosophers' way, who never made their own minds the subject of discussion: they had an esoteric doctrine, expressed only in symbols, never in words."

"With the idea with which you started," said

Spinoza, "I am in perfect harmony; if I were a theologian, I might make an allegory of it; how the high-priest of the temple of Jerusalem, on peril of his life, entered the Holy of Holies but once a year, declaring the unutterable name of Jehovah therefrom, while all the people without fell on their faces. By a little 'pious fraud' we might easily substitute the idea which you have otherwise expressed; but I am not fond of such interpretations, they are usually self-deception or worse."

"Do not take the thing so barbarously literally, that is a glorious interpretation: but once, when the divine unites itself with the human, the Holy of Holies of the Temple of the Heart may be opened, and the unutterable incorporate itself in words. Why, it would be a good symbol, too, for many situations in life: in daily intercourse those who are near and dear to each other keep their isolated niches, which then would open, and would forebode what lies so deep in the heart and cannot be expressed."

"Forebodings, even between the most confidential, are often illusions."

"No, not in this case, indeed not. Ah, it is so heavenly to feel, dispensing with words, yet with undoubting confidence, that the very depths of our souls, which no eye can penetrate, are in friendly communication with another's. What can be better than, in the thousand varying circumstances of life, to look into other eyes and know that there every feeling exists with equal power, and in unchangeable harmony with your own?"

With what deep unutterable yearning Olympia gazed at Spinoza; a rich colour flushed her cheeks, her lips trembled with excitement, her whole attitude was one of abandonment.

Spinoza regarded her with unmoved countenance. Could a man of such fine feeling, sensitive to the slightest influences of thought and imagination, could he not see that here was a soul yearning for conscious communion with his? Had he no feeling for her? Or did he by force of will repress an inclination that could only bring trouble to both himself and Olympia?

"The unutterable of which you speak," said Spinoza after a painful pause, "I see more clearly

day by day, must remain such with our thoughts of God and Nature; we are never more than half understood, or are misunderstood."

Clearly he had comprehended Olympia, and wished to turn her thoughts into another channel.

"I shall not be able to come here to-morrow," continued Spinoza, "my sister is to be married to young Casseres, may she be truly happy! She understands me best, we often converse together half the night through."

This digression had not the desired effect.

"You are more fortunate than I," replied Olympia, "I am so lonely. I never knew my mother. You cannot imagine what it is for a girl never to have known her mother; I have often thought how very different I should have been if I had not grown up among men, and been educated almost entirely by my father. That dreadful war robbed me of my only brother; my cousin Cecilia, who has stayed here during my father's absence, was his betrothed. Ah, you would have been a dear friend to Cornelius, perhaps more so than to me."

"Certainly not that—but it is odd you should both have such heathenish names."

Did Olympia not agree to this, or did she really not hear him? Anyhow she continued in the same tone:

"I have often thought that, if one, of us must die, would it not have been better if I had died? Cornelius could have been of use to, and enjoyed the world; but I, what should I live for?"

"To feel joy in yourself, to illuminate and charm with your intellect and graceful presence," answered Spinoza, inwardly blaming himself, thinking he had committed a fault in speaking thus.

"You jest," Olympia answered bitterly, "once, I confess, I was vain enough to think so, but I have learnt to see that Nature should have sent me into the world under another mask, and at another period."

"Pray, do not belie yourself," interrupted Spinoza, "I am sure you think better of the world and of yourself. I dare not praise you, you say so often I have no eye for beauty."

Cecilia entered the room at this point, and relieved

them both from a painful conversation. Spinoza soon after took his departure. He went home with a peaceful sense of self-conquest, for he thought, that he had suppressed, with masculine power, the first buds of Olympia's inclination for him; a certain secret triumph he could not repress, that he should without solicitation be beloved by such a woman as Olympia.

Olympia was out of temper the whole evening, and as she lay on her bed, she bedewed the pillows with bitter tears.

"Has it gone so far with thee," she said to herself, "that thou throwest thyself on any one's neck, and he stands with straightened arms!"

She sighed deeply, and Cecilia often enquired what was the matter with her; she gave no answer, and pretended to be no longer awake, but in fact could find no rest.

"He is a heartless, selfish man, with a frosty intellect!"

No, she could not say that, she could not think so of him. His youthful modesty, his invincible truthfulness, and, above all, the unmistakable signs

of good will and love for humanity in his countenance; the tender smile of his loving mouth, and the glowing depths of his dark eyes! No, she could not make him a caricature.

Singing and carolling she arose next morning, and as she stood before the glass, her looks said:

"No, it has not come to that yet, and were he a God, and thought himself raised above all human woes, my honour and self-respect require that he should kneel to me; and then, having won him, I will see how to begin."

With gay self-satisfaction she continued her toilette.

Not with such gaiety did Miriam de Spinoza don her wedding garments, for religious custom had here ordained a strange and harsh contrast. Beneath the glistening bridal robes, the bride must wear the sheet in which she will one day be laid in the bosom of the earth, her winding-sheet; the lovely ringlets of Miriam from this day forward would be hidden beneath cap and veil; the long prayer of the Day of Atonement with its list of sins must be repeated; neither meat nor drink

must pass her lips, till, beneath the wedding canopy, her bridegroom pass her the love-draught in the wedding-goblet, allowing her to drink thereof, then shattering the glass against the wall.

The family-feast, since his banishment among all nations, the only one of joy remaining to the Jew, aroused to the full his inwardly fostered yearnings. The agitation which the wedding preliminaries and the wedding itself caused in all hearts, was now dissipated in unchecked gaiety. The married pair pressed each other's hands and told each other that, in view of the newly consummated union, all so long suppressed would receive new life; youths and maidens looked glowingly at one another, the one became quieter, the other more openly animated to hide their emotions. A tearful thrill was in every voice of the assembly, and yet it sounded as harmony to each; and as they looked from one to the other, each read joy in the other's countenance. At table all rejoiced in the affectionate meeting and suitable union, all expressed their joy, and drank to each other's health, and in this expression of their rejoicing it grew yet greater.



All praised the bride and bridegroom, their beauty, their good-heartedness, their future happiness, and found a reflection of all these in themselves.

Baruch, in the midst of this community of feeling and rejoicing, was but the more sad and lonely. Was it because he could not help thinking of Olympia that he felt a stranger, or because he was so far removed from the present company in point of thought?

The meal was over, the cigars puffed cheerily, the company grouped themselves according to their liking, and the hum of voices became still more animated as it was heightened by an occasional laugh.

Baruch remained seated at the table, his face was flushed, for he had imbibed no less than the others of the "sweet fire;" he dreamily gazed into the bottom of his glass.

Chisdai, who had come to Miriam's wedding feast to conceal the fact of his former wooing, approached Baruch with Ephraim Cardoso. "Wine that rejoices the heart of man" (Ps. civ. 15.) he recited, waving his glass with jovial emphasis.

"That is probably the reason why the Talmudists wished men to have no vivifying wine," replied Baruch, "but weakened it by the admixture of water." Baruch addressed the word to his glass, but Chisdai must have overheard them.

"Yes," said Ephraim, as he drank to Baruch, "our forefathers knew how to live. Does not the Talmud say: 'The spirit of God only rests on man in gladness?' I was once by when the late Professor Barläus said to Rabbi Manasseh ben Israel: 'Only the Greeks, not even the Romans understood how really to enjoy life; the Jews were always too much engrossed in fathoming what God was, what he was like, and how he should be served; that they had been fairly successful in; but meanwhile all enjoyment of earthly life had gone to the ground.' He should come here now and see whether we cannot be jovial good fellows in the fear of God."

"Well meant, Ephraim," said Baruch, and drank to him kindly.

"And even if what Christ said was true," said Chisdai as he struck the table, "we could give up

all pleasures, ay, even life itself, for the truth that we alone possess, the revelation of the real nature of God? We alone are free from error and deception."

"Ho! ho!" laughed Baruch, "you take too much in your mouth. Do you not know, that in the tractate Sabbath (and he added according to custom of the Scribes page 32.) it tells of the Talmudist Rabbi Samuel, who would never go over a bridge, unless accompanied by some one of another faith, because Satan could not prevail against two religions."

Chisdai stroked his young beard and enquired:

"You are now studying the Greeks and Romans, tell me: do you not find all, and much more than all, in Judaism, than the learning of other nations can show?"

"Look at the thing aright," answered Baruch, "there is as much and as little of mere truth in the Bible, as in other books; look at it impartially and not with Jewish prejudice; is not the human soul sometimes spoken of as contained in blood, sometimes in breath? Ay, and moreover, is God

an immaterial being in all passages of the Bible? I know, the Bible is said to tell people the literal truth; but consider: God is represented as filling space, for he appears on Mount Sinai in clouds and fire; in the vision of Moses, his foot was of white sapphire. And that is the highest ideal of God? There are sublime and pure ideas of God to be found in the Bible, but how He is in and about things, how He creates and maintains, that seems to me to be taken for granted, never proved. And even that on which we lay most stress—the conception of Him as the one only Godhead—is not sufficing, and can only be used figuratively; because we cannot form any idea of, or expression for, the omnipresence of God.”

Chisdai clenched his fists under the table, “And the prophets,” he asked, “have they all known nothing aright?”

“The prophets,” answered Spinoza, “were great and upright men, endowed with a spirit that strove to comprehend the infinite whole; men, to whose hearts not only the fate of Israel but that of the whole world lay near, as Isaiah says (xvi. 9.), ‘Therefore

I will bewail with the weeping of Jazer', but beyond that, they were men as we are, ay, in many things more ignorant than we are, for in many cases they did not know the first principles of the laws of nature; if the Spirit of God spoke directly by them, how could they remain ignorant of such simple things?"

He spoke yet further on these subjects, and in the details he adduced, he became yet sharper and more decided. Chisdai remained quiet and cold, but ground his teeth; when he had heard enough, he went away with Ephraim, without saying a word.

Spinoza remained at the table alone, he would not rise, all seemed so uncongenial and repulsive to him. He had just drunk off a glass of wine, to distract his thoughts, when his sister Miriam approached him.

"What have you done?" she said. "That spiteful Chisdai is breathing fire and fury against you. I was standing by Chaje in the kitchen, and reminding her, how she once dreamed of my wedding, when I heard Chisdai cry: 'Cursed be the air breathed by this shameless one! You have heard

Ephraim, how Baruch has slandered God and the Prophets; O, that no hand will stretch from Heaven, to tear his lying tongue from his jaws! But I will not lay my head down to rest, until he is swept from the earth.'—Ephraim tried to pacify him. 'It is well you were by,' continued Chisdai. 'One witness is not evidence, you must go with me before the Sanhedrim, we will accuse him, he must be laid under the great ban, I will yet set my foot on his neck.' Ephraim said, he would not witness against you, he had heard nothing. 'So you will not!' cried Chisdai, and seized him by the arm, 'then you must swear you heard nothing, and if you do, you may go to the devil with him.'—I heard it all, for they did not notice me. But, dear brother, you bring the most fearful misfortunes on us, I would rather die, now, on my wedding day, than live through this."

Spinoza pacified his sister, but he could not pacify himself.

"How great you thought yourself yesterday," he said to himself, "when you told Olympia that our conceptions of highest things should remain un-

expressed in the soul. Now you have proved yourself." The whole day he remained sunk in grief.

Chisdai's efforts had not the wished for result. Every one had regard for Benjamin Spinoza and his influential connections; and there were only words, not deeds, adduced against Baruch. Chisdai was obliged to defer his undertaking to a more favourable opportunity; he could easily wait that long, for soon after Miriam's wedding Baruch's father again lay dangerously ill. No one would inform the sick man of the rumour that attached to his son.

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## CHAPTER IV.

## PANTHEISM.

OLYMPIA from day to day revealed the wealth of her intellectual and spiritual life more freely to Spinoza, and he felt himself most agreeably excited by the vivacity and elasticity of her mental powers. She had not only that rare quality in a woman—the desire for unvarnished truth in the correction of her modes of thought, but that of accepting unreservedly and freely these demands against herself. She had, moreover, a sort of hospitable motherliness which took charge with friendly alacrity of all that was brought to her, even of what she did not know what to do with. Thus it happened that she perpetually attracted fresh offerings, and many things that the bringer had wholly forgotten she brought forward on some later occasion to his astonishment, and occasioned a double feeling of pleasure to the original possessor, pleasure in the



unforeseen possession, and in its faithful guardian. Thus Spinoza's thoughts easily took reference to *Olympia*, and he was more communicative to her than to his friends. Was not such devotion love?

Spinoza knew himself to be free from all desire to possess *Olympia*, he found so much to blame in her, and can love find anything to blame in the object of its regard? He rightly disapproved, however, of *Olympia*'s referring so often with indestructible naïveté to the wealth and luxury of her earlier experiences; if a new life had begun for her with his appearance, what was this resurrection of the dead for? Ought not the past to disappear without leaving a trace behind in view of present happiness? *Olympia*, strange to say, thought to strengthen her partially weakened natural power by her traditional power, but Spinoza's disapproval thereof ought to have served as a proof, that he was not perfectly free from the desire for possession, since he certainly desired monopoly of rule. One day Spinoza and Oldenburg were with *Olympia*.

"Heaven is not favourable to us to-day," said Oldenburg, "for it makes such a tearful face at us

that we must renounce all idea of spending a pleasant day at your hospitable Buiten (country house)."

"Heaven, that is a fine invention!" retorted Olympia jestingly, "that weather prophet (pointing to a barometer) is the thing now. Heaven can no longer do as it likes, Torricelli has shown himself its master. Is it not perfect despair to think that we have now neither Heaven nor Hell? Copernicus and Galilei, more fortunate than the Titans, have stormed Heaven. The stars nearest to us are dark bodies like the earth, and the earth far off is as bright as the twinkling stars; our star-decked carpet is gone, where now can we place the throne of God? Hell, too, we have no more. There, we used to think, below, far below, roasted and stewed the godless, till Columbus steered ever Westward, and now we know that people live there too, just as we live; what shall we do now with our pious and godless ones?"

"Jufrow Olympia," answered Spinoza, "did you not perfectly agree with me last Friday when I explained to you, that the external appearances of things had justly fallen away, that men might hold

fast to the ideal of them. Every elevation of mind by which a man rises above his personal harmony, and chimes in with the universal harmony, the existence of God, you may call it, if you are so fond of the term, is, to my ideas, Heaven and its felicity: that state of forcible separation from self, no hold in self, and no external support, in opposition to the laws of natural destiny, shaken by the slightest impulse, without consciousness of unity with the whole, can there be a more frightful Hell?"

"Granted," replied Olympia, "but I prefer my earlier ideas."

"That I believe," said Oldenburg, "but you cannot throw such metaphysical ideas at any one's head; that is not friend Spinoza's fault, however."

Oldenburg had not intended his words to contain any double meaning, but they gave that impression. Olympia blushed, and a pause ensued; but, though embarrassed, she quickly tried to resume the thread of their discussion.

"You can hardly believe," she began, "how inexpressibly miserable I was, when, as a child of ten years old—you must not find out how long ago

that is—I realised that there was no sky, and that the earth turned round in infinite space; it seemed as if I held my life in my hand, and might at any moment let it fall. My father soon set me at rest as to the movement of the earth, but I cannot endure the loss of the Heavens yet. It was so beautiful when it was a firm canopy, and now the blue dome is nothing but refraction, the blue of the Heavens nothing but the blue of the distant mountains, produced by light on one side, and dark bodies in the back ground on the other. O our beautiful blue Heavens!”

Spinoza thought of his grief at the death of his uncle Immanuel; it was singularly fascinating to feel that Olympia had gone through the same struggle as himself. Oldenburg took it upon him to answer:

“I condole sincerely with you,” he said, “to be robbed of the delicious hope of one day hearing your silvery voice resound in the chorus of the angels, and with wings on your back, glistening with rainbow tints, sing Halleluja and Hosanna all day long for entertainment.”

"The ambassadors of Heaven do not use such stale compliments as the envoys of the Hanse towns," replied Olympia hastily, and, turning to Spinoza, continued, "Listen, I can give you an example from very near, what a good refuge the old Heaven is. My cousin Cecilia, who has stayed very long at Mass to-day, was the betrothed of my brother Cornelius; now he is dead, she is pleased to see her charms fade; for her daily prayer is, that God may be pleased soon to take her to her bridegroom in Heaven. On his birthday she writes to him regularly, and describes her life of the past year, rejoicing that another year of their long probation has gone before their eternal union. It is often quite weird to me to be with her, I feel as if I had a sleep-walker with me, who by some unexpected cry might be startled from her safe elevation."

Cecilia entered dressed in the deep mourning, which she had never laid aside since the death of her lover; from the customary black veil, which covered her from head to foot, looked forth a pale refined face on which pain and sorrow were at

home, the weary eyelids drooped over the blue eyes, whose fire was extinguished. The painful shock which pervades a company when any one enters who has just been spoken of, was deepened now by the singular apparition of Cecilia; with a rose-garland in her hand and that pious endurance in her countenance, she looked like some beatified penitent. Olympia was secretly annoyed that she had—for which the two friends had already blamed her in their own minds—so publicly revealed the secrets of a broken heart. No one could find a word with which to resume the conversation; even Oldenburg, the sworn foe of all melancholy, could not suppress a shudder when he looked at Cecilia. She, too, felt that she had caused embarrassment, and soon excused herself on the pretext of having forgotten a visit.

“I often envy Cecilia the peacefulness of her faith,” said Olympia.

“You can acquire it yourself,” replied Spinoza.

“No, I cannot,” replied Olympia hastily, “I once complained of my unhappiness to my uncle Boniface, who was priest of St. John’s here; he advised

me to read the Bible; I did, but it was no good. He told me perpetually to read it with a believing mind, but that is what I was seeking in it; if I had it already, I should not want the Bible. It seems so hard and difficult often, when I think that I cannot understand the reason and object of the world."

"I think Descartes could help you over your doubts."

"Oldenburg, you are a zealous missionary for your philosophical warrior," said Spinoza. "Do you think Jufrow Olympia would agree with the view, that soul and body are each self-existent beings, who would not follow each other if the miraculous intervention of God did not connect them, and constrain them to mutual obedience?"

"That would be a pair in harness, such as Frau Gertrui Ufmsand calls unwilling matrimony: I hate that like death."

"Tell me plainly, do you find the doctrine of Descartes so thoroughly unsatisfactory?" enquired Oldenburg.

"It is not my business to discover the faults of others."

"Then tell us simply your own solution of the eternal problem."

"That is not so easy to do: rules concerning external facts are much more easily defined than concerning processes of thought."

"I have noticed," said Oldenburg, "instead of Descartes's *cogito ergo sum* you put *sum cogitans*. To think and to be are inclusive, not exclusive. In that case thunder and lightning are one, if though two different minds first perceive them one after another."

Spinoza nodded smilingly, and after considerable opposition he explained: "The connection into which Descartes has brought his two substances by means of a third is only apparent; two perfectly independent and unconnected substances cannot be co-existent, for where the one ceases, the other begins; they exist in proportion, in the exact proportion to their limitation and negation of each other, each one thus neutralising the absolute independence of the other. Nor can two equally perfect wholes co-exist together, for either they are totally or partially dissimilar, so that neither is



perfect, because each one lacks certain perfections of the other; or they are totally similar, in which case they are identical. So that these two substances are not held together by a third, but are merely different appearances of one thing; and we can only think of one thing as perfect and independent of all others, and that is God;—Spirit and Matter, Thought and Space, are but different manifestations of one and the same being.” •

“Is there then a God?” asked Olympia.

“God alone is; the idea of God as necessarily includes the idea of existence, as the idea of a triangle includes the idea that the three angles are equal to two right angles.”

“Can we have as clear an idea of God as of a triangle?”

“If you ask, can we have as clear an idea of God as of a triangle, I answer ‘Yes;’ if you ask, can we have as plain an image of Him as of a triangle, I answer ‘No.’ For we cannot represent God to ourselves in an image, we can only recognise him in thought. He is the infinitude of all qualities thought of as a unit; but we recognise him only

in single manifestations, which we trace back to him as the centre; but we cannot comprehend this centre as such, nor make any exhaustive representation of it. The words *one*, and *only one*, with which we could designate God as the only self-existent substance, are always founded on human conceptions. God is an incommensurable quantity, which can have no reference to any other, because nothing beyond it exists; *one* and *only one*, though taken in their exclusive sense, still presuppose a reference to some other."

"Does God then stand in no relation of comparison with nature and history?"

"Nothing exists that is not of him and from him, all that occurs he does; all that is, he is; it is only a change of form, the eternal, the infinite is ever the same."

"O that is glorious!" cried Olympia, "the pure childlike joy of Nature, with its hidden smiling deities, such as the ancients had, is here so beautifully combined with the awe-inspired reverence that Jews and Christians observe in the contemplation of nature; God lives in us, ourselves;

from the crimson lips of the rose, from the modest eyes of the violet, in the melting notes of the nightingale, the same spirit speaks that lives in me, they know, and see, and hear me as I see them, we are one. Yea, I think even the inanimate objects have what we call individual life or soul, and cannot understand. Any unskilful lout can blow a flute, but as we express it, the tones are no longer pure and true, and though we notice no difference in the material, its Psyche is injured, only a skilful master can again draw out its rightful tones with careful handling, and again we notice no alteration in the material parts. Ay, and the soul of man can just the same be put out of tune, and how it rejoices when the right tone is again elicited!"

It was difficult after this digression, which had a certain relative aim, to return to the original common train of thought. Oldenburg wished to hold fast to his more than ordinarily communicative friend, and, in his peculiar manner, he tried first to secure his ally, and enable him to proceed at the same pace. So he turned to Olympia, and said:

"Women do not like demonstrations that are not

pictorial, in which they are often like children. If Philosophy, however, is to be compared to any art, it should not be to music, but to the plastic art. Yes, you may smile. Ideas are cold and colourless as marble, the images of the chisel, like abstract thoughts, are not mere portraits of this or that particular figure, they rise the higher the more they become typical; there the beauty of humanity, here true humanity. The Philosopher is a sculptor, however paradoxical it may sound."

Olympia too was ready to fall in with his humour, but she turned, not to Oldenburg, but to Spinoza, and said:

"Many ways lead to Rome, also to the Rome of free thought. Each one works out the given material, according to his custom and requirements. I will prove to you that I understand you. When you say: we have as clear an idea, but not as clear an image of God as of a triangle; I translate it to myself thus: there are no pure notes, each tone comprises several different ones as it is struck, swells, and dies away. We cannot perceive the pure note, it is too fine for us; even so we can, in

the thought of God, form only an ideal, not an image."

Spinoza said at last smiling:—

"I would only explain still further, that though we feel ourselves one with the infinite, the degrees of consciousness of the innate divine power are yet infinitely different. Above all we must lay aside that pride of humanity that regards everything around it as mere means, and itself alone as the end and aim, that values everything only in its relation to itself—the supposed turning point. Everything in the world consists of means and end combined."

"I follow the banner of my generalissimo," interrupted Oldenburg, "and ask, is it not merely a refined materialism to which you return?"

"Were it rational, it would be justifiable, but I come to quite another result. The only and exclusively enduring substance, which to me remains the only conceivable one, is not the rough clod which cannot in any case be got rid of; I do not materialise spirit, I spiritualise matter."

“How do you explain with this eternally identical substance the origin of the world?”

“The idea of cause and effect is innate in us, and recognised by external evidence, if you follow up the train of effects and causes, you must at last come to a first cause; this first cannot be the result of any other, it contains the reason of its existence in itself, it is cause and effect in its original uncreatedness; is God in his revelation as world. The origin of the world is the origin of God himself, the one is not imaginable without the other; the world is the only external manifestation of the existing God. If God has the power in Himself to create the world, he must create it, for in Him dwells no power that does not immediately proceed to its exercise; a latent, useless power would be imperfection, which we could not ascribe to God as the ideal of all perfection. It can neither be a casual, nor an arbitrary external, nor a similar internal motive which sets this power in motion; not external, for God as the epitome of all perfection, must be absolutely independent, and cannot be subject to any external influence; it cannot be

internal either, as a mere exertion of arbitrary will, for if God could will this, or will the other, he might also will something imperfect, in opposition to his nature; he can only will the perfect, and his will is deed, so all in him is inevitable necessity. God has the world in him, and is in it, God and the world are alike eternal. Truly, those who have thought of God as something above the world, floating in empty space (which does not exist), to them God was before the world, he created it out of nothing, and still hovers over it in Heaven; but long ago men were aware that from nothing something cannot come, and so must have recourse to strange theories of emanation; so the world remains ever something that God has cut loose from himself, which he watches over and with which he interferes from time to time; so that according to their theory of things, the miracles are acts by which God disturbs the once firmly settled order of nature, his own revelation; but miracles were done only as long as men believed in them, in our time there are no more; are we therefore forsaken of God? In any case, if this were the true view, but it is not,

for God is not the external cause, but the internal innate cause of the world's existence, in him all is an act of free necessity, everything,—”

“Look, look, there is a white raven:” cried Olympia, rushing to the window, and Oldenburg stood up to see what she meant by the ill-timed jest; Spinoza only sat still and smiled quietly, but Olympia could hardly contain herself for laughing.

“You a statesman!” cried Spinoza, “and not see that I was guilty of a *mésalliance* between royal families of ideas! But sit down again, and I will avenge you on the jester, I purposely chose the expression; tell me what is the meaning of necessity?”

“I was confirmed long ago, and need not be catechised so strictly: yet—necessity is anything that must be.”

“Only half expressed; all that without innate opposition to its own nature cannot otherwise than be, that is necessity: that no slumbering power can be imagined in God, I have already proved to you; and all that he does, and is, he is and does from



innate necessity, but freely, for to be free is to be moved to act of himself, and from no outward or neighbouring cause; God, therefore, outside whom nothing is, and who continually wills of Himself, acts continually in perfect freedom; ay, even men then are not free (as is usually believed) when they act in contradiction to the laws of their nature; for there it is always an external impulse they obey, not their own nature; they are only truly free when they act in accordance with the necessities, or if you prefer it the laws, of their nature, for then it is only themselves whom they obey."

"Still another question occurs to me," interrupted Olympia. "God, who has his laws or his necessities in himself, is in all his acts free; but men who have received the cause, and laws of their actions from God, act according to the universal will, and yet are not free?"

"The individual inclination is as different from the universal will, as Peter and Paul are from mankind; they exist and act for themselves in individual freedom, though they fall collectively under the idea and laws of humanity, of which they

cannot pretend to be perfect representatives. Whoever has advanced so far, that his individual inclinations are in immediate accord with the universal laws of reason, so that he destines himself for what God or Nature has destined him, he lives in God, and is a partaker in the highest felicity, but only a partaker. In the individual the community cannot be included, it is as impossible as the squaring of the circle."

"But in that way," objected Oldenburg, "if everything happened inside the limits and according to the laws of the universal or divine will, the evil would be as much of necessity as the good, and he who does evil, is not accountable for it. All therefore must be blessed. And the Scriptures lie that say, God punishes the wicked. Evil is thus a necessity, and why did God create it?"

"When it is called so in the Scriptures, it is because they are not written to teach men philosophy, but only obedience and righteous living, and therefore accommodate themselves to ordinary ways of expression. God, however, did create what we in our ordinary conceptions call imperfections, because

he had the material to create everything with one word, from the highest to the lowest degrees of perfection; or to speak more exactly, because the laws of his nature are so comprehensive, that they are sufficient for the creation of all that can only be grasped by an infinite intelligence. ‘Men can be excused their deeds, and though losing in happiness on that account, they may be chastened with much trouble and sorrow. I answer with Paul,” continued Spinoza in a stern voice, ‘They act according to their nature like serpents, and like serpents must therefore be destroyed. He who becomes mad through a dog’s bite, is he not excused? And yet men do right to burn him; he who cannot restrain his inclinations, or control himself by regard for the law, is to be excused on account of his weakness, but yet he will never rejoice in peace of mind, the knowledge and love of God—which is the only true good—it is a matter of necessity that he goes to ruin.’

“You speak of the love of God,” said Oldenburg, “of that which we have for him, and of that which he bestows upon us; if, as you say, God does

everything of necessity, he does nothing for love, and because he must do everything, if he would not resign his own existence, he cannot demand our love, and we could not offer it to him."

"That is a fine objection!" replied Spinoza. "Must love be something in opposition to nature, or arbitrary, to be accepted as such, or to earn a return of love? Was it not love that your father bestowed upon you? And did you love him less, because he must love you according to his innate nature? What is commonly called the miracle of love, arises from that innate, and therefore free, determination, by that highest necessity which is placed in our nature; and that is true love, with the indelible stamp of divinity. Each outward act, each labour, each work of art is the freer and more perfect the less arbitrary will has to do with it, the more thorough the innate law has become and lets it appear to be a free product of nature. The self-knowledge of what each one will, or ought to do, that is salvation, therefore love of God is the highest salvation, or, as I might call it, the highest felicity."

Olympia followed the two friends but unwillingly and with difficulty into the icy region of metaphysical contemplation, where no flowers bloomed, and no birds sang, and all below was enveloped in the mists of the universal; she admired and revered Spinoza's intellectual power that could bear her up there, and give her a glimpse of the infinite, but it was strange to her to be here above the clouds; the way to her organ, her well-ordered books, and gay canary birds lay so far away; so she greeted these words of Spinoza's as a message from her happy familiar home life. She was no longer afraid of this heaven-storming hero-mind, for he who could speak such words as these, he must know how to love. Her cheeks glowed, her sparkling eyes gazed absently into space, her whole soul was deeply moved. The two friends did not notice it, for they were discussing the unbroken and insoluble connection of the universe; at last Spinoza looked at Olympia, and she at him, their eyes met.

"Where were you then?" asked Spinoza with tender reproach.

"Oh, everywhere!" answered Olympía as if just awakened.

"But not with us," said Spinoza; he little knew how these words wounded Olympía.

"There I have another plain proof," triumphed Oldenburg; "that body and soul are two perfectly distinct and independent things; your soul floated far away in far distant realms and wholly forgot that you were simply here with us."

"If you turn all the events of the moment so quickly to your own interest, I congratulate the inhabitants of the good town of Bremen on their envoy."

"Never mind," said Spinoza, "he only wants to revenge himself for the white crow, he is not in earnest."

"At least, I am in earnest in thinking that such examples taken from surrounding circumstances are the best warnings against vague speculations."

"So called practical proofs easily take a somewhat angry, or fanatical tone," answered Spinoza, laughing. "I only said, spirit and body were inseparable and dependent on each other in

so far, that they can only be viewed as different manifestations of one and the same being; the spirit cannot be confined by the body nor the body by the spirit. Still no one has discovered what the body is capable of without the spirit, or by what means the spirit sets the body in motion; indeed there is a considerable class of ideas, to which, we know indubitably, certain qualities of body are needful. Speech and Silence even, which we regard as prerogatives of the mind, and from which man deduces his absolute pre-eminence, prove nothing, for in sleep and delirium men speak without any voluntary effort, yet through the mind; free thought, reaching far beyond our mere bodily sphere, always finds room, without the intervention of any independent separation from the body."

"As for me, I will not attempt to oppose your theory," said Oldenburg, "this co-ordinance, and so to say co-divinity of mind and body, agrees with a favourite idea of my own; I always disliked to hear the phrase, 'fleshly desires war against the spiritual.' This helotry of our body with the godly suppression of the devil-nature of our physical selves,

must if consistent, as with the Hindoos, not only excuse suicide, but even represent it as the highest moral duty."

"Paradox, rank paradox!" said Spinoza, "a suicide under any circumstances is guilty of spiritual cowardice, for he lets himself be completely overcome by external things that happen to be in opposition to his nature. From the lowest stage to the higher of the natural order it is the fundamental duty of every component part, to fulfil its destiny, and this in a reasonable manner; that is, as our veritable constitution, shown by nature, would do, by *Virtue*. This is no egotistical principle, for this self-preservation is impossible without the corresponding preservation of others. What corresponds externally with our nature and this effort of self-preservation is good, so much the more what lies in our nature itself is good; naturally we must herewith keep firmly before our eyes, that only the true knowledge of God and our own nature is the essential good, and that we must direct the aim of our lives to this. Good and evil, viewed on their own merits, are not positive qualities (which is also, to a certain extent,



the watchword of your General), they are only differing forms of thought or conception, which arise, because we compare things to one another. Your favourite occupation for example, Jufrouw Olympia, music, is good to the melancholy, bad to the sad, and to the deaf is neither good nor bad." Olympia would have objected, but Spinoza continued with animation:

"We would have it for the ideal of mankind, that we should consider the expression *Good* as answering to all of which we certainly know that it is approximate to the original model of human nature, and *Evil*, of which we certainly know that it is in opposition to it. No man, thief, murderer, or debauchee, no man desires evil for evil's sake, but in the moment in which he commits the crime, it seems good to him for his self-preservation, for the increase and improvement of his own well-being, and is only erroneous in this, that in following his passions, he becomes unfaithful to the laws of his nature. The freeman, that is one, who, coming straight from the hands of God or Nature, knows nought of the ideas of good or evil, acts in every

circumstance according to the immediate impulse of the laws of his nature; then, when the dissension between his wishes and requirements, and the commands of his nature first enters, and when he wishes to avoid this by the intervention of others, the knowledge of good and evil, and evil itself enters. The dissension occurs because he wishes to control himself by another and an external means, and no longer acts in free accord with his internal laws; the discord lies in the fact that, for the fulfilment of his natural laws, he requires an agreement with outward circumstances. The free independent human being, such as the earliest one, knows no difference of good and evil, he acts ever in accordance with internal harmony and freedom; with society entered dissension, sin, and history. It must ever remain our highest object again to incorporate this freedom and independence, without disturbing the existing constitution of society, on the contrary, not in solitude, but in communities, where we live in mutual conformity, we are free. We must mentally return to that standpoint of innate freedom, where it was given us to know and follow of necessity the

laws of God, that is of our Nature. Such was the pure object of Jesus Christ, to lead mankind back to the original freedom of their laws in natural harmony with them. Therefore was he come, according to his own words, not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it."

Spinoza had carefully avoided all details that could give occasion for a digression; but Olympia, who had again obliged herself to follow the discussion, now asked:

"Can we not demand from your ideas, that they should heal the ills of the world, and make the sick and sorrowful whole and joyful?"

"I do not understand what you mean."

"I ask, how, in your view of the creation, do you explain physical ill? That is something actual? You have told us of the merry glass polisher Peter Blyning. How was the good man in fault, that he should be doomed to shuffle along club-footed?"

"You confuse your questions so one with another, that I must take the liberty of separating them. What consolation has the usual view of things for Peter Blyning? such as: 'whom God

loveth he chasteneth,' or 'we are here but candidates for a higher career,'—the question still remains: why should his candidature be made so difficult? Above, all will be set right for him. they say; but if he is to have two feet up there, he has not them here, and has much pain for want of them. The easiest way of shuffling off this question, is to say; 'the ways of God are unfathomable,' that is, in other words, to let the question remain a question. But the solution of this problem lies in quite another direction. All ideas of perfection and imperfection, beauty and ugliness, like the final causes which we ascribe to Nature, are not necessarily appropriate, but merely ascribed to her by us, for we give things relations which they do not possess. All these ideas merely arise because we compare things of similar form and species, and then discover faults and failings where none such exist; everything is perfect, for each thing must be compared with itself alone. Error and confusion always arise because we prefer to measure things by ideals; that is, with universal ideas which we have acquired or imagined. The ideal, or pure idea of any given

thing should only be derived from itself, from its own nature and attributes. Then the complaint ceases, that the world does not realise our expectations. Each force exists and appears according to its own laws, not according to an ideal. What does not follow inevitably from the necessary working of the natural cause, is no part of the nature of a thing, and all that necessarily follows from the nature of the effecting cause, must of necessity be. Beyond this we cannot and must not demand anything, there is no rule and no obligation beyond, and we can apply no higher measure: Peter Blyning is, when viewed on his own merits, as perfect as the most perfect Adonis. He can no more desire other feet, than he can demand wings, for the fundamental cause of his being merely suffices for this form, and for no other. Do you think it an imperfection, that an ox is an ox and not an eagle? To every stage of human existence it is permitted to feel and to find agreement with self and with the universe, and to be raised to, and sustained in serenity by it. Our consciousness of harmony or discord with our assigned nature, the belief that

this consciousness is given us, which man as a mere instinct calls conscience;—”

“Conscience is a stocking that fits any foot; the savage strikes his father dead when he is old and infirm, and thinks it his conscientious duty; the Jew’s conscience reproaches him when he eats the flesh of swine, and the Catholic beats his breast when he has neglected Mass.”

So spoke old Van den Ende, who then suddenly entered. Spinoza quietly replied, that no man could reason away conscience; that pure conscience which merely exists in the feelings, and which men have dressed in all manner of external shapes, must often be liable to deception; but that inner voice which enters our consciousness, which tells us so plainly when we have acted in opposition to the laws of our nature and the universal order, is as undeniable and reliable as our knowledge of our own existence.”

“Yes, my dear father,” said Olympia, “I shall always be grateful to Herr von Spinoza for the many great ideas which he has imparted to us.”

She then explained to her father the leading

## SPINOZA.

ideas of what had just been said; Spinoza had now and then to add something, but on the whole he saw with inexpressible pleasure how completely Olympia had entered into the grounds of his views. This pleasure did not long remain undisturbed, for the laughter of old Van den Ende annoyed him extremely.

“Do you remember the saintly Christopher in the asylum at Milan of whom I told you?” he said, “he would suit you very well, he too was of a piece with God. Ha! ha! ha! There is yet something excellent left to laugh at.”

Spinoza's whole soul rose against these words. Mockery is the deadliest poison to kill the seed of life in a growing character or a growing idea; our Philosopher, however, was sufficiently strong already to blunt and turn off with little trouble all the pointed arrows that Van den Ende discharged at his speculations. Spinoza felt strangely touched when Olympia said to him at parting,—

“I am now quite grateful to the rain for having confined us to four walls. I do not think such connected trains of thought as you have given us

could arise, or be expressed, in the freedom of Nature; colour, sound, and fragrance would protest against it, for that we must be alone and at home. The wise Greeks did not attain to it because they lived and taught in the open air. Come to-morrow to our Buiten: Socrates and Plato await you among the green bushes."

Spinoza had not time to explain what a singular echo this expression awoke in him, for he recollected that the Rabbis ordain: "When two go together to speak of the Revelation (the Thora), and one says: 'Look how beautiful that field is, how beautiful that tree'—he has committed a deadly sin."

Does the highest thought demand abstraction from the outer world?

The two friends left the house in silence; Cecilia met them just in front of it.

"You too must say, 'He that is able to receive it; let him receive it'" (Matt. XIX. 12.), said Oldenburg; Spinoza pressed his hand, and they separated.

After such a discussion he was obliged to go to the Synagogue.



## CHAPTER V.

## PROSELYTES.

*DE LAGCHLUST* was the inscription over the entrance to the Van den Ende's country house, outside the Utrecht Gate, with its freshly painted doors and window shutters; it was neat and modest, and gave evidence in the laying out of the Garden, the well-covered espaliers, rich flower-beds, and shady groves, of the Dutch character, which, failing in the beauties of mountainous country, found means by higher culture to give their plains a quiet beauty of their own.

We meet our familiar companions here in the open air at last, Olympic gods hidden in the bushes, and above them all on a soft green lawn the bust of Democritus attracted all eyes.

To-day the garden and house did not seem to answer to their name, no desire to laugh was ap-

parent, a peculiar feeling of depression seemed to possess them all.

Kerkering and Van den Ende walked away to a distant path in animated conversation, the two friends joined Olympia and Cecilia. Olympia bade Spinoza lay his cares aside, his father's illness was certainly not serious, he should give himself up to the serene enjoyment of Nature for the present.

"Your King Solomon," she continued, "must have been very fortunate to understand the speech of all birds and beasts, he must have been so much at home with Nature."

"Perhaps he was too much at home therein, and that is why he said all is vanity," interposed Oldenburg.

"I do not miss Solomon's skill in my enjoyment of Nature," said Spinoza. "Nature would annoy me if she were eternally chattering to me of all her doings, and never left me to myself."

He had no second thought in saying these words, but Oldenburg and Cecilia looked at each

other in embarrassment as they listened to them, for Olympia often had somewhat of the lecturing tone common to most teachers, who, from the habit of seeing pupils stand before them in mute attention, carry their explanations and expositions into conversation also.

Olympia, however, had not the faintest idea of such an application of this speech, she applied it rather to their parting words of the previous day.

"I cannot bear to enjoy Nature alone," she said. "When I felt myself carried away into other worlds by the enjoyment of pure sight, I involuntarily grasped at my side to press some friendly hand in mute sympathy."

No one answered, each one looked at the ground. Oldenburg had for some time perceived the relations arising between Olympia and Spinoza by their occasional glances and turns of speech; he was diplomatist enough to believe he could employ these intercepted secret messages towards founding a friendly compromise without an open explanation.

"What do you say," he said, "to Queen Christina

of Sweden having presented her crown and sceptre to her cousin, not, as we at first supposed, to garland herself merely with the poet's laurel, but to deck her brows with the myrtle wreath?"

"What!" exclaimed Olympia, "is Queen Christina going to be married?"

"Commercial advices arrived yesterday from Rome, in which it is decidedly affirmed that the daughter of Gustavus Adolphus will return to the bosom of the one true Church, in order to be able to marry her High-Chamberlain Monaldeschi."

"Indeed Queen Christina has cast off all earthly considerations freely and unrestrainedly to partake of the blessings of our faith," said Cecilia in a gentle voice, and no one contradicted her.

"If the daughter of Gustavus Adolphus has done this," said Olympia after a pause, "that she might belong wholly to the man of her choice, the deed is above all reproach; love is a bond which ought to loosen all earlier ones; how simply and truly it is expressed in the Bible, where it says: for her sake leave father and mother. The question here is only, whether the obedience of the

so called—weaker sex goes so far as to make the sacrifice hers in this case. Christina of Sweden has certainly done enough by her abdication; is it not rather the man's duty to take this unpleasant step instead of hers? If he would not do it he would be unworthy of, and lost to, her love, and her step would be censurable."

"But if such a step were in opposition to his own convictions?"

Olympia did not answer and looked at the ground.

Spinoza hesitated whether to join in the conversation or not, for he had partly penetrated Oldenburg's intention; as Olympia, however, here looked at him with an entreating and enquiring glance, he replied:—

"If Monaldeschi were the cause of her abdication, and knew it, he had taken upon himself responsibilities towards the Queen, and nothing ought longer to prevent him from agreeing to her wishes in everything; but if insuperable objections existed for him, he ought, as a man of honour, to have

rejected the connection from the beginning, as one whose obligations he neither could, nor would fulfil. I might make a more general application of this event. The reformed ministers of this country accept the doctrine of Descartes as the best deduction from Calvin's; Queen Christina, the most zealous follower of this philosopher, who taught her himself, can find proofs in it on which to ground her conversion to the Catholic Church."

"The Catholic religion is the mother church, and it is a natural impulse to return to it."

"Speak out," said Oldenburg to Spinoza, "I see by the corners of your mouth you wish to answer: if the Catholic Church is the mother, the Jewish is the grandmother Church, and could just as well demand that we should don her vestments. But we will take another example: Turenne is so pre-eminently a field-marshal by nature, he will only bear the star of his own faith on his breast, standing in the front, and not in the ranks among the members of the Catholic Church like a common soldier; is he not right to do so?"

Spinoza noticed the digression as Van den

Ende, who had come into the circle with Kerkering, interposed,—

“Turenne is a soldier, and soldiers, who hourly risk their lives, do not willingly lay aside their familiar armour, they think this or that superstition has made them shot-free, but if once peace were made I do not think it would be difficult to make Turenne turn Catholic.”

“Were he capable of loving a girl tenderly and ardently,” added Kerkering, “he would soon join the one saving faith of her possession; it would be cowardice then, when the greatest was at stake, not to be able to conquer a prejudice acquired in the nursery. He who truly loves can only believe in his beloved one; her heart is his church, her words his only revelation, she alone is worthy of his reverence, and nothing is above her. That is the true regeneration that we desire in a maiden’s love, which makes us inseparably one with her. Who can think then of the limitations which men place around one another?”

His companions stared in astonishment at Kerkering’s words; only old Van den Ende nodded ap-

provingly, and Olympia said after an awkward pause:—

“While we are talking over principles, a poet’s mistress, sick unto death, is perhaps dying for such principles.”

“Who is that?” enquired Oldenburg.

“The betrothed of your former friend, the poetess Maria Tesselschade, will hardly greet to-morrow’s dawn. Did you know Caspar Barläus, Herr von Spinoza?”

“No, Jufrouw Olympia, but my old master, Nigritius, who was once insulted by him, has often abused him to me.”

“Seven years since,” continued Olympia, “I remember it quite well, it was not long after New Year’s Day of 1648, they found him in the well near the weighing-house quite dead: he had been with his betrothed the evening before; the well was on the way to his own house.”

“Had he thrown himself in?”

Olympia nodded assent, she forbore to assent in words.

“He certainly killed himself,” Oldenburg re-



marked, "but it is incomprehensible to me how he could hold fast to Tesselschade for so many long years, and at last, when they were both grown old, take such a desperate step because he could not marry her."

"Why could he not?"

"She was Catholic and he was Protestant; indeed, he had formerly suffered much persecution as a Remonstrant, his whole thoughts were borrowed from the ancient Greek and Roman world, and yet he could not make up his mind for love of Tesselschade to change his form of faith."

"It is ridiculous," added Van den Ende, taking up his daughter's words, "he sang all the stories of the Old and New Testaments, with all the Greek and Roman mythology, and Arcadian pastorals; he could not say a word without parading the whole Olympus, he translated even his own love into the language of Horace."

"It seems to me, dear father," said Olympia, "that Barläus was obliged to translate all his thoughts into Latin in order to understand them perfectly. Herr von Spinoza, you must read his

poems; a soul overflowing with human love is expressed in them; he had a Rubric of his own, *Tessalica*, in which he sang to his mistress as she sat her horse, and as she sang to her harp, to her ruff and her string of pearls; everything of hers inspired him to poetise. In one ode he sang,

Tessela quae cœlo potes deducere lunam,  
Et tetricos cantu demeruisse Deos—\*

Do you understand the pun by which he changed the name Tesselschade into Tessela?"

"No."

"In the second Idyl of Theocritus Tessala is an infallible love-charm, the name was given to the plant from which the philtre was prepared, but we do not know the plant itself."

"You will always and for ever be my instructress," said Spinoza.

"Will you not, when you have found out how, instruct us in magic?" enquired Kerkering.

"You are already an enchanted Prince," replied Olympia. "Herr von Spinoza do you believe in magic?"

\* Tessela, thou canst draw down the moon from Heaven with thy songs, and bind the gods of darkness with gratitude.

"In yours," he replied hastily; Oldenburg shook his head disapprovingly.

"You have forgotten one main point in the love story of Barläus," he said, "do you recollect that, in the epistle dedicatory prefixed to his poems, he maintains that the three *L's* are incompatible with matrimony, *Libri*, *Liberi* and *Libertas*, as they do not co-operate well. Poor fellow, he wrote Epithalamiums for all the world, and could not have a wedding of his own."

"He wrote a lovely *Carmen* on the wedding of my uncle, Overbeck, in Hamburg," Kerkerling threw in; Oldenburg continued:

"If a truly sublime and thoroughly poetic soul had dwelt in Barläus, and the Professor not peeped out from every hole and corner in him, the denied possession of his Tesselschade, and his own pure love for her alone might have made him become as a fragrant garden of heavenly poetic bloom. If Dante had embraced his Beatrice, if Laura had cooked bread-soup for Petrarch, never would the one have raised himself to be the Homer of the Christian cosmography by his immortal canzones,

and the eternal harmony of Petrarch's sonnets would have been drowned in the cries of fretful children. Poetry is not the vulture of fable that perpetually consumes life; it is the flame from which the Phoenix springs rejuvenescent, and with uninjured flight soars heavenward. For individual men, as well as for struggling humanity, the highest possession would be disgust and death, or happy delirium."

"What! can this be Herr Oldenburg?" asked Olympia in astonishment.

"That is a very original idea; then monks and nuns, in their self-renunciation, are the chosen army of poets?"

"You want to put me in the wrong by a clever sophistry," answered Oldenburg, "but I am not so stupid. I only affirm that a man of truly great mind must not cling with his whole vitality to any one arbitrarily idealised person; if he does so he has fallen from God to man, and he dies the death of a man, for he is confined between the hard boards of every-day regrets and necessities. Ay, even could

he be free, and find his self-created ideal realised, he would be obliged to fly from it."

"I am also of your opinion," said old Van den Ende; "the Gods could not have more effectually punished Pygmalion than when they granted his prayer. Such a marriage must be barren."

"There are no Ideals on Earth and can be none;" said Oldenburg in an animated tone, "foolish is he who seeks such, and still more foolish is he who believes he has found them. They may live in us, and hover above us in glorified memories. How infinitely great is Dante, when he sings his pure refined love!"

"There was a time when you thought otherwise," said Olympia.

"I think so still, I myself have no claim to the highest crown of humanity; as I am, live thousands of the great multitude; I must surrender myself prisoner. But if I see a friend, gifted with an exalted and commanding mind, letting himself be imprisoned within the four walls of commonplace; bowing his great mind to serve a self-created idol, I would spurn him from me; for he thus becomes a traitor to the greatness and

majesty of his calling; but if he can keep that ideal which has never perfectly appeared to his consciousness, pure and high, I esteem him happy."

"A sad martyrdom it is to which you condemn the higher minds," said Olympia.

The shades of night were falling, they separated.

Spinoza accompanied Olympia home, she hung on his arm; he did not know how he had gained courage and good fortune for such close communion. Old Van den Ende took care of Cecilia, Olympia and Spinoza followed in silence. When they came to the roadside house, Olympia said:

"Look, there is the well in which the weak, good-natured Barläus drank his death; would it not have been more reasonable and manly to give up his faith than his life?"

"We have not given ourselves either faith or life," answered Spinoza. "Suicide of either one or the other is cowardly and weak; strength lies in bearing one and the other; deny yourself for them, or learn to free them." Olympia was silent.

"This diplomatic obtrusive mediation enrages me," she said after a pause, "that Oldenburg thought

to effect so artfully to-day; a third, who disturbs a tender relation with a word, originates estrangements and misunderstandings, which but for him would never have arisen, or would much sooner have been extinguished."

"I am glad you think so," said Spinoza and bit his lips in violent mental conflict. "Dear Olympia," he continued, "I have struggled with all my might, but I am not so strong as you think; I fall, if you do not grant me your hand, or rather if you do not withdraw it from me. I cannot say the word that my heart would speak to you, but I conjure you, send me from you: never, never must we belong to one another."

Olympia pressed his arm closer to her, her voice trembled, both hands were clasped.

"What!" she asked. "Why not? Have we nailed Christ to the cross? What does it matter to us what a fanatical crowd did thousands of years ago? Have you risen to such a height of intellect to be frightened by a form to which men have bound themselves? Have you not told me a hundred times you loved and revered the spirit of Christ

as that of the Saviour of the world? Would to God our relative positions were reversed, joyfully would I follow you to the altar; where love is, perjury cannot be—or shall I hasten to the Synagogue, and be baptised by the Rabbis?”

“Dear Olympia, if you but knew the force of the pain which now rends my heart, you would not speak to me so. It would be perjury, nought else, if I swore to accept knowingly any other faith. Thanks to progressive development I can declare myself free from the form of faith into which I was born, and can build up for myself a view of higher things as Nature gives the hand to my powers of mind. I can and will be withheld by no personal consideration from speaking out, and living according to my convictions of faith and opinion; a religious community in which I have been placed by chance of birth cannot hinder me therefrom. But it is otherwise, wilfully to enter such; the new community could justly ask me, what draws you to us, if it is not Truth? You have no longer a claim to influence in the old, or in the newly accepted sanctuary. I know the sophisms well enough



that are suggested to us: you merely follow the form, your intellect is still free. But it is and ever will be perjury, and durst I, a perjurer, ever take the word Truth on my lips without blushing? My unhappy countryman, Uriel Acosta, of whom I have told you before, thus ended his life by a dreadful suicide, because he had already committed the suicide of his intellect by recantation. He must have appeared to himself despicable, and unworthy of life in face of that Truth; Yes and No were worth nothing to him, they had become meaningless." Olympia was silent, she pressed one hand to her eyes, and allowed herself to be blindly led by Spinoza. He continued in an agitated voice:

"I return your question: have we thus climbed these heights of intelligence to allow ourselves to be conquered by an inclination which must be the source of infinite trouble to us? I fought long, but I must at last speak to you frankly and honourably; from this hour henceforward let us forget and lay aside all that we were to each other, and that we wished to be. It is yet time. Separation and a strong will may enable us again to find peace: we

have loved, that is enough; seek with another the happiness I dare not offer, cannot offer."

His tongue refused to go on, he was obliged to stop; Olympia's hand trembled in his.

"I am not ashamed to confess I have thought it over," said she, "you can become a Christian without any denial of your convictions; I have even consulted the passage for you; do you know that the root of your new views lies in the words of John. 'Hereby we know, that we dwell in Him, and He in us because he hath given us of his spirit.' Indeed without any inconsistency you must be a Christian."

"Why do you not quote the preceding verse," answered Spinoza, "which has so close an application to our case? 'If we love one another God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.' But reflect if some results of my process of thought agree with the Christian views of the world, must I therefore swear to the Church creed? Perhaps that would be the result contemplated by Justus Lipsius, who, as you know, wrote a book called *De Constantia* (on constancy) and changed his faith every two years."

"I thought you were more independent, but I see Oldenburg has perverted you too," said Olympia in a cutting tone. "You strive after the glory of Dante, but I am no Beatrice, and will not be. O it is too bad! You will throw yourself into active life; a youthful affection is easily forgotten then. Perhaps you will jest over it, while I—what does it matter if I fade away in grief?"

"Dear Olympia," interposed Spinoza, "your own heart must blame you for such words; reflect a moment, what could I offer you? Nothing but a poverty-stricken life of self-denial; if I could forswear the faith of my fathers, if I could live wholly for you alone, be wholly yours . . ."

"Schalom Alechem, Rabbi Baruch, you need not be in haste, Maariph\* is ended;" a harsh voice interrupted their conversation: Spinoza turned round, it was Chisdai, who, without awaiting a response, went on shaking his head.

"Did that man hear what I said?" asked Spinoza.

"I think not," answered Olympia, "but it is

\* Evening prayer in the Synagogue.

horrible that such Medusa faces can speak familiarly to you. That decides it, a higher duty has its claims; I will not desert you. I hate renunciation, it is nothing but hypocritical cowardice; it would be unworthy of yourself and of me."

They had arrived at the Van den Ende's house. Spinoza would have taken his leave.

"You must come in with us," said Olympia, "you can hardly imagine how dreary it seems to me when I have gone through great agitation of mind out of doors to go in alone, where the familiar walls seem altered and strange. Everything is a burden to me, I think I shall die of restlessness and inexpressible longing; generally I then play the organ until I find rest in perfect stupefaction. Come in with me, I entreat you to."

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## CHAPTER VI.

## KISSING AND DYING.

CECILIA was praying in the next room before her crucifix; Spinoza sat silently near Olympia, her hand rested close to his, but he did not attempt to clasp it; dreamily and reflectively the two lovers looked long at each other in silence.

"When I am so exalted to the very highest point of rapturous spiritual enjoyment," said Olympia, "I feel nothing but longing for death; now borne so far above all small annoyances, now I would that I might die, so near and akin to the Highest, I should be absorbed into his being."

"Formerly, when I was still capable of such religious raptures, I was often possessed by such a desire for death," replied Spinoza. "We might perhaps find the explanation of this sensation in the Talmudist legend, that Moses died of a kiss, in that God the Lord recalled his soul to himself in a kiss."

Olympia was taken by surprise at this strange turn. Was this mind always absorbed in its investigations, or did he wish by such parables to veil the ardent wish of his heart, and yet to explain it? Formerly their exchange of thoughts had been easy, now they sat mutely together, and did not know what to say to one another. At Spinoza's desire Olympia sang the ballad he had surprised her while singing the first time he saw her; she sang the refrain

"You are my own true wife,  
No other shall be my own for life"

with such melting tenderness, and drew out the notes of the organ by which she accompanied herself into such long drawn sighs, that Spinoza painfully missed the repose which the song had once given to his agitated heart; it was with difficulty that he refrained from clasping her to him and sealing the melodious spring of song with a kiss. He could trust himself no longer, so took his hat, and went away. Olympia took the lamp and lighted him down the steps, but without a word; below, Spinoza held out his hand, she laid her curly head on his

breast, he embraced her; her heart beat violently under his hand.

"Dear Olympia," he said, "I conjure you by all that is holy, love me not; I am not worthy of it."

"I must love you," she said, "command my heart to cease beating. I cannot leave you—" her voice trembled, he pressed her closer to his breast, and held her fast with an ardent kiss. He then tore himself from her embrace, and rushed out; Olympia sprang warbling up the steps, and cried in a sprightly voice: "Good night, Herr von Spinoza!"

He stood before the house, the door shut behind him. With heavy sighs passed care-laden married couples, who endeavoured to enjoy the holiday evening in the fresh air; lovers passed with quicker steps and livelier conversation, sailors sauntered on, and merrily sang and chorussed the old Dutch ballad:

"To eastern lands will I journey,  
There dwells my sweetest Love;  
Over hill, and over valley,  
Far over the moorland,  
There dwells my sweetest Love.

“The sun from sight has sunk under,  
The stars now blink out so clear ;  
I know that I with my loved one,  
Far over the moorland,  
Was in that orchard so near.

“The Garden door is fastened,  
And no one can come in,  
But the nightingales only,  
Far over the moorland,  
Who fly from far to come in.

- “We must the nightingales fasten  
Their heads to their feet close to,  
That they may tell nought to others,  
Far over the moorland,  
Of what two sweet lovers there do.”

“And though you had thus bound me,  
My heart is not the less sound ;  
So thus I can yet prattle,  
Far over the moorland,  
Of two sweetest lovers' death-wound.”

It was a varied throng, Spinoza hardly noticed it.

“Women's ways are indeed unfathomable!” he said to himself. “Did she not feel the infinite depth of that moment? Or did she act with such apparent indifference to all that had passed, to hide it quickly from Cecilia? But how could she possibly do it?”



He could not go home in such agitation of mind, he crossed the street, and sat down on the steps of the Chapel of St. Olav's. He looked across at Olympia's lighted windows, and often saw her shadow pass backwards and forwards, until the light was extinguished. He was almost ashamed of himself, gazing at the windows of his beloved like a sentimental knight, and laughed internally as Tessala occurred to him.

"I cannot leave you, say you; I will not, I dare not leave you, I tell you; have I not pressed your coy, pure lips to mine? You are mine, mine for ever.—Was not my mother a Moslem, and changed to our faith; should I have remained a Moslem if by chance I had been born such? But thy father and mother loved each other wholly and uncontrollably at first sight, and, as to thee, dost thou think Olympia faultless? Hast thou not, flattered by her wild charms, persuaded thyself into a connection that at first appeared to thee so objectionable?—A Love, that must overcome doubt, is greater and more enduring than that other that seems as if fallen from heaven; it is intellectual love. Thou

wouldst picture to thyself a life of self-denial, away with it! She loves thee, and at her side thou wilt find renown and happiness, honour and joy. What will give me back the pleasures that I would cast from me for the sake of truth? Truth!—But must I be her slave? I alone, of so many thousands, condemn myself to give up my inborn right to the gay pleasures of life? I will deck truth with the fig leaf of orthodoxy, will choose words with double meanings to save superstition; should I not thus serve truth still more? Thou wouldst serve her by lies.—No, I would never speak against my convictions, but only shut them close in my breast.—And the Catholic confession of faith? Olympia loves me, must I not save her? Some day, in happier times, it may be otherwise, but now, I must obey the times.—And thy father? and Geronimo?—they were believing Jews, but thou?”

Such thoughts disturbed Spinoza's mind, to which the ever returning chime at the quarter hours in the quiet night made a singular accompaniment. To him Life was not measured by the notes from the Church tower.

Is no other way to be found? . . . .

He must have sat there a long time, for towards midnight Maessen Blutzauffer and Flyns, arm in arm like two powers holding each other in equipoise, reeling homewards, jested over the poor sinner, who, instead of seeking his mistress, cowered there in the cold night on the hard stones. Spinoza noticed nothing of what went on around him; at last he stood up, and when he looked at the place in which he had remained so long, he was forced to laugh against his will; it was the Church built on the model of the Temple of Jerusalem.

"Sleep sweetly," he said to himself as he looked at Olympia's window; "I have watched over thee, thou shalt rest ever at my side."

The bells rang loudly, the organ resounded through the whole building, an innumerable throng filled the Catholic Cathedral. Spinoza stood before the altar between Dr. Van den Ende and his daughter; Olympia was in bridal attire. Above, in the gallery, stood Spinoza's father, his garments rent, his countenance pale and stony. High Mass began, Cecilia and Olympia knelt down, Van den

Ende and Spinoza followed their example. Chisdai and the skeleton of the fat Domine were dressed as acolytes, Chisdai swung the censer, and whenever he made the sign of the cross on his brow, his fingers caught on the bridge of his nose; and when the skeleton did likewise, his fleshless fingers stuck in the hole in which his nose once had been; and when they rang the bell, his bare ribs clattered like dry poppy-heads shaken by the wind. High Mass was ended. Spinoza advanced alone, and knelt before the priest on the steps of the altar. He cursed the mother who bore him, and the father who had begotten him, because they had not taken him from his birth to the bosom of the one saving faith; a cry of grief was heard from the gallery, and a corpse was carried out. Spinoza repeated the creed in a low voice, inaudible to all but the priest; the priest laid both hands on the head of the candidate, blessed him gently, and sprinkled his brow three times with holy water; the organ broke out in joyous tones:

“Baruch, Baruch!” it now cried, “get up!” It was only a dream. Spinoza lay in his bed, and old

Chaje stood before him with a light. He passed his hand over his brow, it was wet with cold perspiration.

"What is the matter?" he asked.

"Your father is dying, it would break the heart of a stone! The men from the neighbourhood are already below."

Baruch sprang hastily out of bed, dressed as much as was absolutely necessary, and ran down stairs; his father must already be very bad, for he heard the men chant in loud chorus: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is One God."

As he entered the room his father was repeating the conclusion of the prayer:

"Master of the World! Lord of Pardon and Mercy, it is by Thy grace, my God and my fathers' God, that my thoughts mount to the throne of Thy Glory, to Thy Goodness! Look on my trouble, for because of thine anger there is no soundness in my flesh, neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin. Now, O God of Pardon, grant me Thy Grace, and go not into Judgment with Thy

servant. If this be indeed my hour of death, may the knowledge of Thy Unity not leave my lips, as it is written in Thy Scriptures: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one God!' I confess before Thee, Eternal One, my God and the God of my fathers, God of all Spirit and Flesh, that my recovery and my death are in Thy power. It would be by Thy mercy, if Thou shouldst allow me perfect recovery, and my thoughts and my prayers should mount unto Thee like the prayer of Hezekiah in his sickness. But if the hour of my death be indeed come, may my death be the atonement for all the sins of omission and commission which I have sinned and committed in Thy sight from the day of my birth. Give me my share in the Garden of Eden, and console me in the future world reserved for the pious. Show me the way of Life, make me full of joy before Thy face, for at Thy right hand are Eternity and Glory. Praised be Thou, Eternal, Hearer of Prayers. Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my Spirit; Thou wilt save me, Eternal God of Truth."

Baruch sat down at the bedside of his father  
*Spinoza. II.*

whose breath came with ever increasing difficulty; he clasped his son's hand whose fever-heat the cold hand of death could not cool.

"Father!" cried Baruch; he could say no more.

"Pray for me, my son," said his father gently; the rattle became ever louder, every instant they thought his breath must stop, all those assembled cried incessantly:

"Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, is One God!"

The sick man prayed with them, he raised his eyes to Heaven, and with the word "One" he gave up his breath; his lips, still pressed together, opened as if for a kiss—he was dead.

Rabbi Saul Morteira opened a window as a sign that the soul journeyed to Heaven, and all present repeated:

"Praised be the Righteous Judge!"

Baruch sank from his father's bed to the floor, and pressed the dead hand to his hot brow; from above in another chamber echoed the half suppressed lamentations of Miriam and Rebecca; those present conversed in low whispers, and were just on

the point of going away, when someone was heard to mount the stairs with loud, stumbling haste, the door was thrown open.

"Is he dead?" enquired a voice.

"Hush, silence, Rabbi Chisdai!" answered those present.

"Woe, treble woe to this house!" cried Chisdai. "He alone could have yet saved his *Ben sorer umoreh*;\* I heard with my own ears that he meant to turn Christian, and marry a Christian woman."

"If you do not go out this instant," answered Samuel Casseres, "and if you say another such word against my brother-in-law, I will show you the way out, no one invited you."

"You will invite me, and I shall not come," answered Chisdai, as he was shouldered out by the others.

Benjamin von Spinoza had desired in his will that his broken old Spanish sword should be laid in the grave with him; the Rabbis objected for some time to fulfil this desire, whose meaning but few could imagine. Spinoza was obliged to bring

\* Stubborn and rebellious son.



forward many authorities from the Talmud before he could see his father's wish fulfilled. Outside in the graveyard, in accordance with old Jewish custom, he was made to kneel down at his father's feet, and beg forgiveness from God and his father for all in which he had sinned against them, then he must tear his garments on the left breast, and when the coffin was lowered, the son must be the first to enter the grave, and throw a handful of earth thereon. He did all this with uncertain step and trembling hand; Chisdai sprang forward to support him.

For seven long days Spinoza was obliged to sit on the ground with rent garments and without shoes, and for thirty days he was not permitted to shave his beard, but his outward appearance was not so uncared for and torn as his inward feelings. How often as he rested his elbows on his knees, his faced covered with his hands, how often he thought of Olympia. What would become of them?"

His greatest trial was a visit from Oldenburg and Meyer, who came just as he was sitting on the

ground with his sisters, and the Rabbis were chanting a litany or sort of Mass for the dead before the congregation.

He thought much about the free unfettered life he would make for himself. Desire for rest and contemplative solitude often rose in him like an overwhelming home-sickness; he felt imprisoned by the tumult of the world and its ways. And again he saw how his whole former life had been beset by difficulties. He would strive for consistency; should he find it in union with Olympia or not,—it was at least a painful consolation that the unmitigated opposition of his father no longer stood between them.

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## CHAPTER VII.

## STILL LIFE.

SPINOZA was walking thoughtfully down the Kalverstraat, when someone said, "Ha! ha! how proud we are!"

Spinoza turned round; it was Frau Gertrui Ufmsand who was looking out of her ground-floor window.

"How are you?" she said, "you look as sour as vinegar. I have only seen you once in this street since Magister Nigritius died, and that was a fortnight ago; you passed with Olympia Van den Ende; I said 'Good evening' twice, but you were better employed, neither of you either heard or saw me. Those were fine times, were they not, when you came every day to the Magister? But you have grown twenty years older since those days. Ah! we have gone through a deal with our apartments since then. First we had a painter, who

went to Vespers in the Church where clinking glasses are the bells, then he would come home, a full fool, and wake us out of our beauty sleep. Then we had a widow, who would have skinned a flint, and looked so sharply after us all day, we could hardly breathe before her. It was my husband, he is a queer fellow, who at last gave her notice; I never said anything to her, but said to my Klaas: 'she is a widow, we must excuse her.' The beautiful little room has now stood empty for half a year, and we have just had it fresh painted, it is all fresh done up, and looks like a little chapel, I never like to go up the stairs to it."

"Geert, be so good as to shut the window, the bits all fly in my eyes; if you want to talk to the gentleman, go out, and let him in," cried a gruff voice from inside the room.

"Come in for a bit?" said Gertrui shutting the window. Spinoza went in, and said he should be glad to take the room, as, to do his work, he must either be in an open place or high up for a good light; the good people thought at first he was jesting, and were greatly rejoiced when they found he was

in earnest. Gertrui showed him the little room, on whose floor the fine sand was artistically sprinkled like a lace pattern; the little bed in a recess, like the berth of a ship, was empty.

"Look," said the woman, "that is the old Magister's armchair; I washed and dusted everything, there is not a speck on it now, I can find you everything but a bed, I use all my beds for the apprentices; here the Magister kept his books, you can put your books there now. Have you the same bad habit as the blessed Magister of laying all your books in sight on the tables, chairs and stools, and not letting any of them be moved without a regular storm? Did you never see that beautiful white Amaryllis that the blessed Magister was so fond of? It disappeared from the day of his death, though such animals generally stick to a house, not to the people in it; I would give a good deal to see it back again: I should be sorry from my heart if anything happened to it. Ay, and it was so knowing, it could tell to a minute when the raw meat was brought, and we were never bothered with mice."

Spinoza regretted he had nowhere seen the cat.

If we have again given too much space to the chatter of an old woman, we may bear with her loquacity a little in consideration of the motherly care which she took of our philosopher.

Spinoza, whose two brothers-in-law found themselves deceived in their expectations, was obliged to take legal means for the division of his father's inheritance; when he had obtained his legal rights, he voluntarily gave up his share, keeping only a single bed with its necessary hangings, which he had taken with his work-bench and his few books and clothes to the house of Klaas Ufmsand. Here at last he was permitted to order his outer life in perfect conformity with the requirements of his spiritual nature. That serene equanimity derived from conviction, which opposes tranquil deliberation to the stormy excitement of the decisive moments of existence, as well as to the annoyances and the restless struggles of every day life; that self-dependence, won by cheerful renunciation of the intoxications of empty exhausting pleasures; that exaltation and satisfaction in the kingdom of intellect, a

peace of mind won after hot conflict, a clear penetration of the world, whose enigmas were solved, and eternal laws discovered; these were the benefits which he made ever more plainly and firmly his own in solitude.

From early morning he sat working at his bench. As he snipped a piece from his glass with the sharp diamond, he broke an idea off from the great system that lay complete though undeveloped in himself; when he worked the leaden plate and gave the glass its proper form, the idea in him gained firmer shape, and so on through all the stages; ever more distinct the form, ever more transparent the material; many splinters must fall, many rough places be smoothed, till at last the truth should be reflected in the mirror. When he had earned his bread by the day's handiwork, in the quiet night by his single lamp, he placed his finely polished ideas before him, collected the dust which had fallen from them, and strewed it thereon, that they became opaque; then with a light hand wiped it off, and proved that it did not necessarily belong there, and that he had but hidden the light,

not extinguished it.—So worked, so philosophised Benedict de Spinoza.

Not long after his withdrawal from the busy world, he had to break off some hours a day from his manual labour to lead a younger mind in the paths of philosophy. Meyer one day brought young Simon de Vries to him, who, since the short view we had of him before, had become the lucky heir of the rich results of his father's speculations in tea, and now gave himself up to quite other speculations. Spinoza took him through a course on the principles of Descartes's philosophy. In the same room where he had once learnt to decline *mensa*, in the same chair in which his master had once sat to correct his exercises, he now sat to teach the philosophy of Descartes, and build yet higher on the same foundation, as the necessities of that method required. Honourable Dodimus de Vries, who had once been able to do quickly the most complicated mental arithmetic, had not only left his numerous and weighty ducats to his son Simon, but also his arithmetical readiness. This youthful talent for mathematics gave Spinoza much pleasure.



For two or three days at a time, and often much longer, he never left his room; he never willingly left the familiar solitude in which he felt so much at ease, in which the hours and days, like quiet streams flowed refreshingly and animatingly past him.

Good Gertrui was very uneasy about her new lodger.

"I don't know," she said, "whether you mean to accustom yourself to do without food, or whether the ravens from Heaven come to feed you, like the prophet in the wilderness; you cannot possibly have enough with what you have from me. Yesterday you had nothing all day long but milk soup, some butter, and a little draught of beer, which, with the water and turf I bought, comes to  $4\frac{1}{2}$  stivers, and to-day you have been satisfied the whole day with oat-meal porridge, raisins and butter, which have cost exactly the same. I calculated that in a whole month, you have only at the most drunk two half pints of wine; that is neither living nor dying."

Spinoza tried to make the good dame understand that his earnings would not suffice for greater

expense, and that he was quite satisfied with his manner of living.

"Yes," she said, "one ought only to stretch oneself according to one's counterpane, that is upright and honest; but if one can make the cover longer, is it not stupid to lie doubled under it like a shut-up clasp-knife. The many rich and great gentlemen, who come in and out every day, I know well enough, would be well pleased to give you more money; it would not be like taking a present; they disturb you so often over your work that they ought to make it good again. The servant of rich Simon de Vries has now been here three times to invite you to his house, and instead of going there to eat fresh pulpy crabs, that melt in your mouth like butter, you stay at home to your thin milk-soup. Yet for the rest you know all about everything, one can come and talk to you about anything; I can't think what has come to you that you pinch yourself so."

The good dame would not be convinced by any arguments.

"Learned folk have always some queer notion

or another in their heads," said she as she descended the stairs and told Oldenburg, whom she met there, the whole dispute with variations. Oldenburg, too, was much displeased with his friend's voluntary imprisonment in a cell. He was afraid that such seclusion from active life, such silent burial in the depths of his thoughts and feelings, would create a boundary within which each disturbing element would engender a sensitiveness, of feeling, which would reject all opposition, because it had withdrawn from it. He knew not that such weaknesses of tender and reserved souls are far removed from great and steadfast minds, who know no partiality, for they bear the whole world in their hearts, and cannot be surprised or hurt at the discords of the outer world, because they have penetrated them, and to themselves have reduced all to harmony. Other reasons also made the anxious friend think an alteration in Spinoza's way of life desirable; among these stood first the fear that Spinoza's love for Olympia, which he had rightly guessed, might be so deeply rooted in his mind by solitude that it would become ineradicable. He

still believed that, by prudent measures, he could enter into the life of an independent mind and direct it.

“Our age,” he once said to Spinoza, “the age of humanity, new born from the classics and the self-revelations of reason, has its apostles, who travel through all lands, and declare their new ideas like any others. When Christianity arose, and had not yet made itself accepted anywhere, pious men came forward and preached in all places, even at peril of their lives; and in our age we have seen enthusiastic men wander from town to town, and from land to land, making known the words revealed to them in all places. Think of Giordano Bruno, he has travelled through almost the whole civilised world to support his views on all sides; unfortunately he made the incomprehensible mistake of going back to Italy to die at the stake as a martyr for philosophy. But this way of learning to know the world and its motives and connecting forces from personal inspection, and placing it before the intelligence in living words, not trying to found and rule it from a lonely garret, is the only right way

for a true thinker. Our master or, if you do not like to call him that, our teacher, Descartes, after a time of lonely seclusion, recognised that the Truth must be extracted from the world if it would again pervade the world; he learnt to know men in peace and war, he was even a soldier himself, and travelled much. And you must recognise this too as a revelation of our age, that it has been granted to our century first, in artistic recognition of silent nature, to open the mind's eye to landscape. You too must travel, and if you do not wish to teach the world, you must at least learn to know it truly; you shall not want for money, de Vries and I will willingly give you all you need; you must not reject it, for it is not a present offered to a friend, we pay this tribute to science and mankind; you do more than we, you dedicate your life to it."

"If you please," answered Spinoza in a gentle voice, "if you do not intend to annoy me, let this be the last time that you make me offers of money. I explained to you and de Vries long ago that I could not accept it. Moreover, as far as I am concerned, I cannot endure these new sort of wander-

ing philosophy which you so strongly recommend. I am no friend to disputation with this, that, and the other man, and seldom see any advantage accrue from it, for what is opposed is usually not the expression of pure thoughts, but such personalities and wilful misinterpretations that it has more to do with Peter and Paul, and what they have become by habit and inclination, than with pure intellect."

"Just why you should learn to know Peter and Paul more intimately, to conquer their prejudices, and personal bias."

"I wish to explore and ascertain the laws of human existence and intelligence. I have often explained to you already, that I do not set myself to discover the errors of others; if these are revealed by the revelation of the natural law, so much the better. You, by your profession, must concern yourself for others; to me it is given to search in the book of History and the workings of my own life."

"That you should do," answered Oldenburg,  
*Spinoza. II.*

“and to do so you should investigate the world in the whole, as well as in detail. Let me take your handiwork, these glasses, as a metaphor: were our eyes microscopically arranged, we should look at only a single part, never at a whole; were our eyes only for a distant prospect, we should never know the peculiarities of things. Thus it is the prerogative of human intellect to accommodate by art both the microscopic and telescopic views of things to its own assigned natural mediocrity; and in conclusion by imagination, by thought, to recognise them in their conditions; but this the large and small views must precede. It is thus with our knowledge of human life. So travel and live for yourself.”

“Leave me to my homely four walls,” answered the philosopher. “The world of appearances is well enough investigated and described by others, for us to follow its laws by quiet observation. I am ever myself in my cell here, and strive to collect around me all the spirits of truth; believe me, it is a numerous and goodly company, and I am never alone or desolate, and if I am alone with myself,

I can investigate more quietly and uninterruptedly the mingled elements and connecting links of the human mind. He, who from the height of a bird's-flight, can take in with his eye how one stream flows into another, and at last all flow into the sea, can see no more than is offered to the quiet glance when it follows the inner cross currents of the mind. Yes, he, who can live quietly alone with his own mind—with a mind that is controlled or influenced by nothing foreign to itself—he lives again in Paradise, happy in himself and in the universe.”

Oldenburg's eyes had never yet sparkled as they did now, there was a thrill of reverence and ecstasy perceptible in his usually firm voice and in his whole deportment, as he rose and said:—

“O friend, what can we say to you who have all things in yourself? And yet perhaps a call from without may yet be a motive to you. See, it is not for nought that the legends of all people say that Gods became men, allowing themselves to be confined by the limits and powers of human existence, in order to raise themselves freely from it, and raise others with them, even though it should be by a



death of torture. You too must offer yourself as a sacrifice by following the call of the Truth given to you. You will not take me for the dying thief on the cross, and I will only echo the words which the world may say of your life and thoughts: if you possess knowledge of the Truth,—they will say—and if you are its open and unreserved confessor, come forth from your quiet solitude, come forth into active life, declare, and suffer for it.”

With his hands folded on his breast Spinoza answered:

“To die for a recognised truth is blessedness that knows no pain. What is a long life to that ecstasy which existence itself and the devotion of it to the witness of truth gives could it but convince others? But a martyr’s death proves nothing to others. Men have gone joyfully to death for the most opposite convictions. I myself once knew what is called a believing Jew, who, in the midst of the flames, when men believed him already dead, chanted the Psalm ‘Into Thy hands I commend my spirit,’ and breathed out his soul in song. What could a life of every day returning duties, refine-

ments, and pleasures prevail against the one all-inclusive act of devotion? But if external pressure does not conquer the man standing firm for his knowledge of faith, neither does his death, which is after all only an external proof, convince others. If I, as I hope, may one day so far have cultivated myself as to be able to teach others, I shall have no laws to give them, no rounded sentences to inculcate; each one must find his laws in himself and in the world: the recognition of the laws innate in Nature, that is the salvation of himself and of the world. The character, the conscious development of its natural laws, the appropriate direction of its actions, and free acceptance of the thus necessitated fate, this is the prerogative of humanity, which cannot be taught and cannot be transferred, which can only be attained by individual work in self."

After these words the two friends stood by each other in silent reflection, and on this elevation of thought they again felt the pleasure of regarding the world with one and the same view. Neither knew or wished to know who was giver, who re-

ceiver, they were one soul and one heart, and yet each saw himself reflected in the other. As Oldenburg went away he felt deeply the awe-inspiring power his friend's mind had over him. It seemed audacious in him to wish to control here, he could but give his hand, and lend outward support to the inner independent necessities. He felt blessed in the power for such masculine friendship, sprung from the foundation of pure intellect, that had made devotion to this another personal pleasure.

What can love offer more, and should the thinker, happy in himself, not be satisfied with friendship alone? Spinoza felt more and more at home in the peaceful serenity of his life, whose equable happiness can be called nothing else than blessedness. For the exercise of the intellect in solitude is the highest felicity of life, near to the eternal sun, above the tumult of the world, above the clouds which float in the atmosphere of the earth. In solitude life is explained, there no cry from without is possible, nothing to break the stream of the thinking existence. And what first appeared as Will,

fortifies itself into self-sustaining endurance. Thoughts flow together like a chorus of saved spirits and carry the physically imprisoned soul with them. Set free and forgotten is the mortal Self, and Life becomes Thought.

What disturbs in the present and in uncongenial contact, wins a milder meaning, and awakens a gentle conciliation in the mind that is inspired by a love of truth and rectitude, and that no reproach can drag down. It was like an awakening from that unconscious life which yet had moved in the immaterial paths of thought to the inner development of himself, and the consideration of himself, and his relation to the outer world.

When Spinoza so abstracted himself from all personal considerations in the pure exercise of thought, he was often surprised at the recollection that it was some days since he had seen Olympia, even since he had thought of her, and yet he loved her with his whole heart. It was not stormy demonstrative love with its overwhelming passions, it was the quietly growing inclination whose roots rest in conviction and the clear knowledge of the

necessity of the relationship. This love, however, had its surprises and enigmatical self-torments as well as any other which is torn by storms of passions. His heart throbbed and swelled with love afresh whenever he went to Olympia's house; and not seldom he left it with an agitated mind, which only recovered itself in his beloved solitude. Would he really conquer his love for Olympia, or would he merely go through a probation with it? He spoke more than ever of his Judaism, and in many other ways, indeed, he strove to place himself in an undesirable light; and yet he was pained again when he appeared to have gained his end, and Olympia—whether from coquetry or to exercise a right of retaliation—accorded all manner of trifling favours to the light-haired Kerkering, by which he felt in the highest degree honoured, and became yet more settled in his conviction that Spinoza was only a man of straw put there to tease him. Since that eventful evening the two lovers had not conversed alone; otherwise misunderstandings and mistakes would easily have been explained; but even exposed to the eyes of the uninitiated observers they

enjoyed the raptures of the inexpressible felicity of love. Often as their lips said the most indifferent things, their eyes spoke all the feelings which they fostered in secret, hidden for one another.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

## CONFESSIONS.

"THE Jews are sounding the alarm after you; they look upon you as a deserter, and want to bring you back to their standard," said Oldenburg to Spinoza, as he entered the room with Meyer.

"Don't be afraid," said Meyer, "you have climbed so high above them, that they will be out of breath before they catch you."

"How would it be," continued Oldenburg, "if, while they are in pursuit, you enlisted under another flag, and dressed yourself in another uniform?"

"But you once lauded Turenne for not doing so," answered Spinoza, "and I should not know what uniform to adopt."

"You are right there," said Meyer, "if I had a uniform to cut out for you, I should use the whole heavens for the purpose, and hang the sun and

moon on your breast for orders." They laughed and Oldenburg began again:

"What is the use of skirmishing? We must take the thing by the throat. Meyer, from his hiatro-mathematical heights, always maintains that the efforts of reason should be directed towards the rooting out of all dogmatic creeds, and especially the authority of the Bible. Luther, he says, has overturned traditional creeds, but has set us down on the barren sand of mere verbal inspiration; he even quotes you, and says, you think nothing of the prophets or sacred history."

"If he does, he is wrong. I think the prophets, with their visions and inner revelations, which we may call direct divine gifts, may probably recognise the Truth as plainly as the clearest judgments of reason; it is only because the former remains on the lowest step of perception that it is more exposed to error than pure reason. Theology and Philosophy are not opposed to one another, they merely rest on different foundations. I am convinced of the eternal and inextinguishable utility of the so-called sacred histories for the common



people. He who believes in them and rules his life in accordance, has succeeded as heir to a great accumulation of Truths proved by experience, to which the small body of men who cannot simply believe in them, can only attain to by their own unassisted powers of thought. Both are fortunate, the latter the most fortunate, because they themselves discover the collected laws of Nature; the Bible cannot pretend to such universal application, and has never done so; it is a slowly accumulated work, which includes much extraneous matter; its aims are not learning and thought, but faith and action; and that is why we ought first to comprehend how we can create anything as good, and yet more definite, by our own innate intellectual powers."

"Look there!" There is my 'original sin' again," interrupted Meyer. "Firstly they say: 'Human nature is originally and thoroughly bad, and cannot understand higher things;' then they say that: 'a supernatural revelation is necessary to save them from this situation.' They cut a leg off human nature, and triumphantly exclaim: 'Look, it cannot walk, or

stand alone, so we must make a false leg, and look after its joints every Sunday, that mankind may run again with it for seven days.’”

“Meyer, you are always trying to enrich the inheritance of original sin,” said Oldenburg; then turning to Spinoza, he continued: “Tell me openly, are you not convinced that Judaism is obsolete and narrow?”

“You ask a great deal; but I must first repeat, that no creed offers us that true felicity which springs only from knowledge of the innate necessities of our natural laws. As things are now, no man, whoever he may be, whether Christian, Turk, Jew, or Heathen, is really recognised as such, but only judged according to his manners and customs, because he goes to this or that church, clings to this or that expression, or swears by the words of this or that master. The only decisive measure at last of all is individual character; that is why the professors of one and the same creed, ay, often the professors of one and the same philosophical system, incline to such different forms of individual and social life. As for Judaism now, it recognises a

godly life quite independent of the revelation of the law; Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were all esteemed godly, though they lived long before the revelation on Sinai. Moses, by means of his sublime and divine gifts, gave the Law to the people as a right, as a constitution. This is destroyed; the primeval right to found divine Laws on individual recognition appears in Judaism too with universal application."

"The Jews always appear to me as a remarkable phenomenon of history," said Meyer. "The Jews must exist as long as there is a dogmatic religion in the world. The wonderful tenacity with which they have endured the most fearful blows of fate must prove that their mission is not yet fulfilled, and that in the course of history they will once more be a mighty lever."

"Such abnormal developments please you," said Oldenburg, and Spinoza replied:

"Nothing is abnormal, everything has its definite cause, from which it must arise necessarily and logically in its destined order. If the ordinances of their religion did not rob them of their man-

liness, I should unhesitatingly affirm that the Jews, as is quite possible in the whirling wheel of human affairs, would one day, when the opportunity occurred, again obtain their kingdom, and God would choose them anew. We have an example in the Chinese, who have again won their kingdom. But the mission of the Jews is fulfilled; there is nothing wonderful in their preservation, it is only the hatred of all nations that has preserved them, and they have set themselves apart from all nations by their customs. These customs may disappear like all other laws of ceremonial, which have only a local signification, and the hatred of the nations may change to love."

"I should be proud to be a Jew," said Meyer; "he is born in such decided opposition to all commonplace, and in himself represents exactly the schism which now rends the heart of humanity. The free Jew, who has cut loose from his own already torn traditions, is the only unbiassed stranger in the world, armed with all the weapons of the masculine intellect, and yet with the unclouded eyes of childhood, capable of examining

and surveying the world as given in history: a privilege and a freedom none other can attain to as easily. We others have too much share in the ruling of the world, and too much partiality for, and familiarity with it. And already in the great current of history it is seen, that the renewing of the whole world has not been done by the dominant nations; neither a Greek, nor a Roman, produced the new world-saving doctrine; it came from the despised, oppressed people, who were shut out from the world's current. In ancient times men lived in perfect uniformity of faith; the religion was the constitution, the constitution was the religion. It was so in Rome and Athens, in Egypt and China, and most perfectly so in Palestine. With the destruction of the Jewish state and the entrance of Christianity originated religion as such, for it was then first cut loose from the state. There were henceforward two powers who took men in charge, and robbed them of uniformity, the State and the Church. Christianity has till now, by the Papal power, endeavoured to reunite the two; the power of the Pope is now broken, the old division is again

there: Christianity does not assign the Constitution."

"I think, we have exchanged the rôles," replied Spinoza, "Christianity does not apply to Nations and States, but to humanity, to all mankind, to make them internally free; it could never be an external law. By means of our recognition of our natural laws we can and must regulate State and Church; in both we must leave room for the investigating minds who bring everything in question, otherwise we again lay our freedom under the bonds of external laws. The religious and political additions made to Christianity from time to time have only been temporary. When Christ says: 'Whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also,' (a rule of behaviour that is also given in the Lamentations of Jeremiah) it can only refer to a time of oppression and lawlessness; otherwise it is according to reason and duty to give him who giveth thee a blow two in return; or to bring him who would sue thee at the law to Justice, that the rogues may not make a successful game of their roguery."

"With such views as these," said Oldenburg, "I should not long hesitate in acknowledging myself of the Christian religion; you need not do it from conviction of the dogmas; therefore, if I were you, I should join the larger and more cultivated majority, who have moreover the greatest power of influencing the history of their time. It is not vanity in a man to have an ugly excrescence removed from his face; he only fulfils his duty to others and himself by removing everything detrimental."

"And I," said Meyer, "would neither respect nor value you from that day forward: you would be a traitor to yourself. But I hear you are in love with the saintly Olympia. What a universally tolerant young lady that is! First she had a Catholic, and then a Protestant, for lovers; now she has a Jew, and, I presume, in Kerkering a Lutheran, as co-admirers; if she has done with you both, I will charter her a Turk."

"Jest and mockery are your original sins," replied Spinoza gravely, "but I request that you will speak with respect of Olympia."

"Ah, the learned Olympia!" laughed Meyer,

"she can conjugate *amo* perfectly in the preterite; but I must be grave. First a painter, who lived for two months in these rooms, was bewitched by her. He was a very young man of great talent and overflowing vivacity; I used to go very often to the Van den Ende's house myself then, and confess that I had not a little to do with Van den Spyck's severing the connection. But if I had known beforehand what would result, I would have had no hand in it; for Van den Spyck took to drinking, and sunk lower and lower till he could stay here no longer, but now wanders unsteadily about the world. Both, Van den Spyck and Olympia, turned their anger on me; so I went no more to my old colleague's house. Olympia's second lover was her music-master; he swam perpetually in clear melody, and was never to be seen without a music-book under his arm, and wherever he went or stayed, his fingers moved as if he were playing the organ. I believe he came into the world with a sheet of music under his arm, and that his first cry was in D major. Ah! he revelled with Olympia in the kingdom of tones. It was the bass voice of her



father that drove him out of Paradise. Imagine the bathos! The man should at least have made a finale with a pistol-shot; cruel! not a week passed before the musical key opened another lock, and he was engaged to the daughter of the director of the Concert Hall; he succeeded to his father-in-law's post, and now lives a comfortable citizen 'andante' with his musical better half. I shall see now what will become of you."

"Spinoza walked moodily up and down the room; with the same feelings as when Chisdai defiled the fair image of Olympia with such bigoted zeal."

"I can't understand you," said Oldenburg, "indeed you delude yourself if you think you love her. Your peace of mind and self-concentration in thoughts that have no reference to love would be impossible if the true fire of passion burned in your veins."

"Do you know all the peculiarities of love in different individuals, that you speak so decidedly on the subject?" asked Spinoza.

"I know love; and even if I were more pas-

sionate than many others, still I know its eternal origin, which is and must be the same with everyone. My acquaintance with Olympia dates from my own love-story; Maria was a friend of Olympia's. No man ever loved more truly than I; I looked with pity and scorn on ordinary men, who from day to day could think of other things, follow a favourite profession, study physic, prepare enactments, or write commercial letters; and then, when the day's work was finished, or a Sunday stood in the Calendar, take a walk with the beloved one. These excellent self-contained souls, how narrow and cold they seemed to me, who thought no other thoughts and felt no other feeling but love alone. I had won a new soul, with an unalterable sameness, for the one perpetual thought was of her and of her alone. When I drew the sweet breath of Maria's presence, or remained in my distant home, her soul was always with me; wherever I was, I thought, soon she will be here with thee, thou wilt call her thine own;—I often trembled at the infinite overwhelming magnitude of this happiness, it was too great, I could not have borne it;—I was shamefully deceived in

my love and in my better feelings. Love another! I cannot and dare not wish to; if it is denied me to pour out my soul in that first fiery passion, I despise any well-behaved citizen love; I am glad that I am too old to be exposed to such another temptation; I have found a sphere of usefulness, and peace is in that."

"Marriage is a sacred and eternal Law of Nature," replied Spinoza; "it is the fairest crown of humanity, if it is made from pure inclination recognised by reason."

"I will not attack matrimony," answered Oldenburg, "but the curse that rests on mankind the more it develops, is, that it is always more and more impossible to partake of the pleasure exactly when Nature requires it. What are Art, Science, and Industry? May they all be destroyed if mankind is not to—"

"He can live according to Nature," interrupted Spinoza, "who has early learnt to master his passions, and to act in accordance with the eternal laws of reason. For this they should not appear as external and arbitrary, otherwise the power of

the passions will often win in the conflict; but if, by our recognition of the law of reason, we have seen the worthlessness of all power and all indulgence of the passions, we shall lead such a life as our true nature exacts."

"It is not given to every man," answered Oldenburg, "to turn his back on the world, or rather to hover above it all in the heaven of his own consciousness; there are wild and stormy spirits who, by mere happy indifference, retain their enjoyment in this world of weighty trifles, of necessary tyranny, and can be kept from madness and despair."

In a mild tone Spinoza led the conversation to its source again by saying,—

"I do not turn my back on the world as you think; I fully enjoy it in my own way."

"And you deceive yourself, if you think you will enjoy it more with Olympia."

"Oldenburg, you have too high-flown notions of matrimony," remarked Meyer. "Believe me, I now have a second wife, and live in great contentment; men are neither so happy in marriage as fancy

hopes, nor so unhappy as it fears. I knew my second wife but little before our marriage; we learnt to know each other and accommodate ourselves to one another afterwards. What men dream about harmony of minds is not practicable; my wife, for example, is truly pious, and yet we live united; indeed, I should not like her not to be so; that quiet faith gives women a special charm. I have two fine healthy boys, a well ordered household, and may say that I live happily."

"You know I respect and honour Olympia," said Oldenburg, "but I must advise you against an union with her. I interfere in the affair most unwillingly, and would give it up now, if I did not know your enviable power of keeping yourself pure and uninfluenced by all opposition. Let yourself be dissuaded. It is not Olympia's first love affair; the first dew of Heaven is gone, her lips have already kissed others, her heart has already throbbed for another; and—you must not be angry with me for saying it,—what you feel for her is not true love; otherwise you could not possibly act with this peaceful equanimity."

"I must, however, repeat," replied Spinoza, "that there is nothing truly desirable which reasonable deliberation cannot comprehend as thoroughly and more permanently than enthusiasm and unrestrained passion."

"Something else occurs to me," said Meyer. "Would it be, to express it from a legal point of view, permissible for Jews and Christians to intermarry?"

"No Rabbi on earth could bring forward an absolute prohibition. Christians are from a Jewish point of view merely regarded as a Jewish sect; that their numerical power in the course of events has become greater makes no difference to the fact. We have sects among the Jews, even individual Talmudists, who consider faith in a Messiah as immaterial, and not among the necessary laws of their religion. An union between Jews and Christians cannot be forbidden."

"As long as such intermarriages are unusual," resumed Meyer, "the detestation connected with the name of Jew will not be generally uprooted. I could almost be in favour of this union; it would

seem so glorious to me to be the Jewish redeemer in this case. But no, you must not only be a Jew, you must remain a bachelor. It is only thus that you fulfil your mission. Whoever takes upon himself family ties and social obligations, his straightforward strictly logical ordering of life and thought are split up and interrupted. Distraction and interruption enter of necessity, and I can already see in my own profession what it is to let my thoughts be turned hither and thither by the thousand changing chances of life. The steady, uninterrupted stream between the thinking mind and the one thought which you set before you is thus perpetually crossed and interrupted; the natural heat flows away, cools, and must perpetually be relighted. So congratulate yourself that you are born a Jew, and are a bachelor by fate and free-will."

For the first time Spinoza was glad when his two friends took leave. Of all the inclinations of man love of woman is the most like faith; its true foundation is only in the individual personality, whose precise view of the case, known to no other, makes it sacrilege to interfere. Why should Spinoza

be possessed by a love which was in such opposition to the world, and therefore gave everyone, and especially his friends, a right to pry into it? A less steadfast and unworldly, because less truth-loving nature would have had his softer sentiments destroyed by such encroachments, and have become bitter against his friends, or self-distrustful. Spinoza learnt by his clear intelligence to acquire here too that devotion which men usually ascribe to the direct influence of sentiment.



## CHAPTER IX.

## MICROCOSMOS.

A HEART accustomed to suppress all stormy ebullitions, to gain the even pulsation and moderation of expression that is as far removed from dull stupidity as from extremes of joy and sorrow, in such a life we do not meet with dizzy heights or dark depths that fill the sympathetic spectator sometimes with painful horror at the threatened ruin, and sometimes with quiet satisfaction at the safety gained.

Our hero has not lost himself for love of a woman, but his better life is endangered by it. He has no one to fight with, but with himself, with his natural and acquired relations. Such noiseless combat, however, excites the pulses of the internal powers all the more that it is wanting in the tangible opposition that rouses combativeness. No visible kingdom will be revolutionised by the rise

and fall of our hero, but a kingdom of the mind, with wide-spreading influence, is brought into jeopardy. In the quiet, unadorned garret in the Kalverstraat, Amsterdam, the conflict will be decided.

Work and quiet contemplation alone are what we shall observe. By earliest dawn we find our philosopher awake at his bench. He has again, as Frau Gertrui expresses it, "taken the day in the eye;" he smiles at this remark, perhaps it means something else to him. If the wheel and the pencil are silent, the room is as quiet as the grave, the world is shut out.

What raises expectation in his face to-day, and why does he look so often at the window corner?

He does not live so much alone as we supposed, he has a companion in a cell made by itself in a corner of his room, for whose daily bread he has to provide; look he has caught a fly, he takes his microscope, and going to the window throws the captured animal into the web. We too will look through the microscope, perhaps we shall be able thus to follow the observations of the philosopher.

Look how the lonely spider springs out of its den. In spite of its eight eyes, its sense of sight must be imperfect, for it does not get out of the way, however near an object is placed to it; but it must have exceedingly fine sensation, for it feels the slightest movement of the net. Or, perhaps, the net still retains a living link with its spinner? Look, how swiftly it throws itself on the struggling prey, surrounds it with long hairy legs, squeezes it and kisses it with the strong proboscis. "That is right, guard yourself, bravely done, but the web! The next crash it is through. There! the hind-feet folded on the back and prepare for flight. Alas! the left wing is torn, it cannot get away, and the devouring enemy is again approaching; now it is seized and carried off to the den. It is all over, it pulls the feet out, and spins its fine web fast all round, it has broken the head from the trunk and sucks the inside out. What comfortable enjoyment! How it refreshes itself! Then it pauses, and then sets to again to gnaw; as if it knew that it was a higher providential power that sent the cooked pigeon flying into its mouth? The spider

certainly thinks the whole race of flies was created for its benefit, and everything is good in so far as it is of the nature of fly, and fills the pouch of the spider. Now it looks as if it prayed to me. Or are the wind and the broom its idols, since it has experienced that they can lay its house in ruins. There it is finished, the bare skeleton is all that is lying there; it creeps back still farther into its corner, its work is ended, since it is satisfied."

The Philosopher laid the microscope aside, took up the Bible lying before him, opened at Chap. xxx. of the Proverbs of Solomon and read, "Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die: Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me": . . . "There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise: The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer; the conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks; the locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands; the spider taketh hold with her hands and is in king's palaces."

The Bible explains in its own way Nature and her propensities, human history and its own wars of extermination. Everywhere an endless successive war of destruction; force rules in Nature, innocent of motive, and in the kingdom of Nature Might and Right are one, and men have fixed laws to protect them from one another, and these laws again only derive their influence from their legitimate power; the divine privilege of man, however, is to be a law unto himself in conscious comprehension of his own nature, which prescribes him peace with himself and the world. In the name of these given laws, divine and human, thousands condemn and devour each other, and what should unite them divides them. Will it ever be possible to establish the power of the law on virtue and love?

Let us congratulate ourselves that to-day we are fortunate enough to find Spinoza undisturbed, for yesterday he had to sustain a sharp conflict. Frau Gertrui came to the door with a broom, just as he was laughing aloud at the fight of a fat blue bottle with the spider.

"Do the Jews too think the spiders bring luck?"

she asked, "You are so orderly, just the opposite in that of the blessed Magister, of which I am truly glad. I will not kill the spider, God forbid, only drive it away. I am quite ashamed when the good gentlemen come to see you, what will they think? It must be a fine housekeeper that never brushes the spiders' webs away."

For a neat Dutchwoman, in her care for the blank cleanliness of her house, you cannot easily find a greater enemy than a spider. It was very unwillingly that Frau Gertrui set any limits to her zeal for scouring. It was no use the philosopher explaining how very clean spiders were, and she was not even pacified by Spinoza telling her, he would explain to all his visitors that it was he who kept the webs there; she maintained, moreover, that he could not be a true Dutchman if he could live in a room with a spider's web.

Let us see meanwhile how he ends his day. Till night he worked, and then jotted down his worked out thoughts on paper. He had strained both head and hands this day, and felt the need of speech; he took his lamp in his hand and went

down to his landlord. When he entered the room, Klaas and Gertrui were sitting at the table with folded hands, their grandson, Albert Burgh, was reading the evening prayers aloud. Spinoza sat down in a corner till the prayers were finished, then drew his chair to the table and conversed with the rest. Klaas complained that the new fashions ruined everything, the button makers were gradually losing their livelihood, because smaller and fewer buttons were worn. Spinoza had consolation for everything, and the people felt much comforted by his conversation.

"Tell me," asked Klaas, "how it is, you are not old in years and have not seen much of the world, how is it you know so well and so quickly what is in the hearts of common men? Before we had been a week here, I felt as if we had eaten a bushel of salt together."

Spinoza explained that the human heart is the same in all circumstances, and that he who really knows himself, can judge of, and understand aright, the movements of the hearts of other men in other circumstances.

"When you speak like that," said Frau Gertrui, "my mind feels as Sunday-like as if I were listening to a sermon; the blessed Domine Plancius used to preach just like you in the Oudekerk. Did he not, Klaas? I have often said so; our dear Herr von Spinoza has such a Christian mind, he has nothing of the Jew about him, he is not a bit like the other Jews, and he is not a Jew."

"Geert, when your tongue is set going it chatters on, whether it is wise or stupid," said Klaas. "You must not take it ill of her, sir, she does not mean ill."

"You know well enough how it is meant; I only say, you are not what the Jews are, so—so—well, you know what I mean."

"Oh yes, and I am not vexed at all."

"Each one stick to his creed," said Klaas, "and he who is brave and upright may be saved by any faith; all men are God's children."

"But you are a child of the devil," said little Albert, who had been listening quietly to Spinoza, "you have crucified our Saviour, and will go to Hell."



Klaas stretched across the table and would have boxed the boy's ears; Frau Gertrui and Spinoza prevented him.

"Stupid child," said the former, "this gentleman did not do it, others did it, who have had their reward long ago."

Spinoza took the struggling boy on his knee, and explained to him that it was no sin to be a Jew, since Christ and his Apostles were Jews; the Jews had certainly not done right to slay Christ on the cross, but things had gone ill enough with them, and men cannot do penance for ever for a fault.

"By your leave," said Klaas, "you have not quite the right view of it. Our Saviour was obliged to die on the cross, because it was foreordained of God the Father; and he could only become our Saviour by so doing."

"Even according to this Calvinistic view," replied Spinoza, "the Jews were still more innocent. You must never believe, dear Albert, that God would damn a man forever."

On this last point also he had to maintain a controversy with Klaas, and especially on the pas-

sage in the Bible: "The Son of Man goeth, as it is written of him; but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born!" (Matt. xxvi. 24.) But the dispute ended quietly.

"Why have you not a great beard?" asked Albert shyly, stroking Spinoza's chin; "in your country all men have long beards."

"In my country? where do you think I was born?"

"In Jerusalem, or do you come from Nazareth? O tell me something about it, it must be so lovely there."

"I do not come from Canaan, my dear boy, I was born here, in Amsterdam, as you were also."

"That is a lie, you are a Jew; is he not, grandfather? The Jews all come from Canaan!"

"Not for a long time now, they have been with us for longer than we can remember, and when the Saviour comes again, and begins his thousand years reign, he will take all the Jews back to Palestine."

"Then I should like to be a Jew too, I want to go with him."

"Be glad you are not one, boy," said Spinoza, "we have long to wait for the Millenium."

"What was your father called?"

"Benjamin."

"But he was not Jacob's youngest son? Jacob was a nice man, I should have been ashamed to have him for a grandfather; he deceived his brother Esau and his father-in-law Laban, and his descendants stole the Egyptians' gold and silver."

"Be so good as to give the boy a couple of sound slaps for me," said Klaas.

"Not I," answered Spinoza, "he is a little Bible hero; but don't forget, child, neither with Egyptian gold, nor with Christ's crucifixion, have the Jews anything more to do; and you must always remember that the Apostles, too, were Jews."

"Geert, put the boy to bed, or else we shall never get rid of him." For once a highly reasonable speech of Klaas Ufmsand. Spinoza with difficulty obtained a hand from little Albert, but dare not kiss him for the world. For sometime longer Spinoza sat talking with Master Klaas, till he

yawned more and more frequently and openly, then they separated.

"You have come to a capital punishment," said Spinoza one day at noon to Oldenburg, as he entered. "In that box I have been starving a folio edition of a garden spider for several days, and there is another empty wretch; I too have a talent for diplomacy, and mean to set a war of extermination going."

He half filled a bowl with water, unscrewed a flat plate from the work-bench, placed it in the vessel, and the two spiders on the leaden island. Each of the spectators armed himself with a microscope.

"Look," said Spinoza, "if there is a spirit wholly independent of the world hovering over it, it is thus that he would watch, as we are now doing over the little conflicts on the earth."

"We must give the two sides names," said Oldenburg, "the garden spider shall be Alexander, the other Darius. Look, Alexander sends out his scouts far and wide; Darius flies, but it is of no use, the sea surrounds him. Both pause for a while,

but Alexander arises and presses forwards; look, how he throws his arms round his adversary, but he defends himself vigorously; now they rise to the conflict, how they seize and squeeze each other, how their proboscises tear at one another; if I could only see their eyes properly! Bravo! Alexander is down, but his long arms press powerfully against the scaly breast of his adversary; now he has torn himself loose; look, how he rushes with fresh courage to choke his enemy; his fall was only a Parthian flight, now is the time; oh, it is all over, they are letting each other go."

"Be quiet," said Spinoza, "that is only a truce, and if it were sworn to by all the Gods, they would break it like men, as soon as they had gathered strength for a new fight. Am I not right in asserting that everything depends on the stand-point and position of the pupil. The Buffalo, mangling the grim tiger with his horns till he lies crushed to death before him, is not greater than this spider in fight; nothing is in itself great, nothing in itself small; only because it appears so to us we would make it so. If men were not curbed by higher

reason, and allowed themselves to be governed only by their ruling passions, they would destroy each other like these animals."

"Indeed this combat is as great as those of men; when in war a thousand fiery messengers send out death, when the ground trembles and the swords flash, drenching themselves in the blood of men, we feel so great in our scorn of death, so almighty in the exercise of strength, we think we could stir the world from its axis, and what is it? A little ant-hill's inhabitants fighting with grasshoppers—"

"The eternal peace has already come to its mortal end;" interrupted Spinoza, "look how they whet their weapons, now bravely at it again!"

The two friends watched the result of the combat without further conversation; Oldenburg had not given the parties their right names, for the garden spider, after a short resistance, was devoured by the other, head and hair and all. Darius was borne in triumph on the leaden island to where he had spun himself a royal tent.

"Ordinary life has many turns and twists of deep signification," said Oldenburg. "Of two people

who pursue each other with inextinguishable hatred we say they are enemies like spiders."

"Your Lord and Master, Descartes," said Spinoza, "could have learned a great deal from these spiders; he would probably have then not brought forward a false proof of a true thing. He tries to prove the existence of God from the fact that we, who have an idea of him, exist. He takes two axioms to prove this. Firstly: 'That which can perform the greater and more difficult, can also perform the lesser and less difficult.' Secondly: 'It is greater to create and preserve the substance than the attributes and qualities of the substance.'—I do not know what he means by that. What does he call easy, what difficult? Nothing is absolutely easy or difficult in itself, but can only be called so with regard to its cause. We want no other example but this spider; with very little trouble it spins a web that men could not make without very great difficulty. On the other hand men do many things with ease that would perhaps be impossible to angels. What can be called absolutely easy or difficult? It would in this way be easily imaginable

that men may exist without necessarily supposing the existence of God. But the existence of God, as we have said, follows necessarily and consequently on the idea of Him."

Spinoza held a lengthier discussion with Oldenburg on the subject. We have remained long enough in the house of Klaas Ufmsand, and will pause until we can again conduct Benedict to Olympia. There our story is quite in another key.

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## CHAPTER X.

## PECULIARITIES.

KERKERING had clasped Olympia's hand, and prayed Cecilia in a jesting tone to be his god-mother if he became a Catholic; he did not let loose her hand when Spinoza entered, in spite of Olympia's efforts. Spinoza stared in astonishment. Olympia blushed, she snuffed the candle, and, during the short interval of darkness, quite recovered herself, and gave Spinoza a lecture on his prolonged absence.

"I cannot understand," she said, "how a man of your age can immure himself so in a cell. Frau Gertrui told me that you had not been downstairs for the last ten days, and that you had, moreover, used a pound and a half of oil in your nightly studies. You might become a monk or a hermit without any self-sacrifice, it is a pity you are not a Catholic."

"I regret it equally: to put off the old man is easy enough, but to draw the old on anew is difficult."

Olympia was silent, Kerkering looked puzzled, he used all his powers of mind, but could not rightly understand what lay behind these words.

"It is provoking," Olympia began again, "that we women must perpetually go in leading-strings, and never dare manage to be free. I cannot help wishing to see the room for one minute that makes the whole world unnecessary to you; take care, I have settled it all with Gertrui, next time you are not at home I shall come and examine everything; I must find the *arcanum* that can keep you so much to itself. You must have something extraordinary there; day by day polishing glass and studying, studying and polishing glass; always alone, not even an organ or a lute near you, no one could endure it. But I shall find out the secret soon."

"This time it is my turn," answered Spinoza, "to deny you a sixth sense, if you seek through everything you are certain to overlook a companion, whose heart glows for me, and whose warm breath

I inhale with pleasure. But alas! this faithful companion is evanescent and frail, like all things earthly."

"O you fanatical and godless smoker! But in your place I would really leave off smoking, it is only an artificial taste, an imaginary pleasure."

"After music, nothing refreshes a weary spirit like a pipe of the American weed; like the waves of sound in music, here the waves of smoke float around us and smooth over all that is ruffled in us. When I easily and silently take a long puff at the pipe, keep the ethereal draught a moment in my mouth, and then let it stream out in a light breath—it flatters and soothes my mouth and lips as a soft melody does my ears. You know well enough the ill effect of that damp cold, gray on gray painted weather; that, if I may so call it, prickly feeling of discomfort, which then pervades our whole being, I can chase that away much better when I am surrounded by a cloud of tobacco smoke. I make myself independent of the influence of the weather, and when I watch the fleeting play of the smoke wreaths, my mind gains in breadth,

I feel myself so delightfully peaceful and enlightened."

"Glorious!" cried Olympia, "now for once I see you as an enthusiast."

"I must become enthusiastic to make you understand the worth of anything that you cannot try for yourself."

"What a pity it is you never knew my uncle Bonifacé."

"Let the dead rest in peace," said Cecilia, who sat reading in the window, "what do you want with our blessed uncle?"

"It does not matter disturbing his rest a little in the other world, he had too much rest in this life, and was always ill in consequence."

Cecilia did not answer, but during the ensuing conversation she retired unnoticed into the next room.

"Was your uncle too a priest of tobacco's vestal fire?" asked Spinoza.

"I remember quite well now a sermon he preached five years ago in the Church of St. John.

He was a zealous opponent of tobacco in both forms; 'they have noses, and smell not,' he cried with the Psalmist from the pulpit, 'they have mouths, and taste not.'"

"And speak not,' saith David," corrected Spinoza, but Olympia continued undisturbed:

"They offer their bodies to Moloch and Baal. Each one from early morning smokes his calf's, ox's, or sheep's tongue, and the vapour rises from his mouth like the reek of a sacrifice. That is why their tongues are dry when they should pray an 'Ave Maria.' They hourly chew the leaves of this plant of sin, as if it were heavenly manna that tasted like coriander in honey comb; and in a while they tickle their noses with the stinking weed that Beelzebub sowed, so that they can no longer smell the delightful odour of church incense. Woe! woe unto this Babylon, this Sodom and Gomorrah! But one day they will find their true reward, and will smoke merrily in Hell, where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth; and those who have tickled their noses will be salted with the leviathan and the other monsters in the depths of the lower world.

The Lord preserve you from such chastisement. Amen!"

"Bravo!" cried Spinoza, "Pathos suits you excellently; you are a living concordance to the Bible."

"Many thanks," said Olympia roguishly, "do you agree with me that the priests are so zealous against tobacco because they are afraid of An-cyra?"

"Not quite, for I think that they will for long and long enough preach the same thing from the pulpit, while the Domines themselves, between each of their saving phrases, will take a pinch of snuff from the gilt box on the reading desk of their pulpit. My Peter Blyning always says, when he takes a pinch fasting in the morning, that it is his spiritual breakfast."

"It occurs to me now," said Olympia: "Do you know the horrible treatise of the wise King Solomon?"

"I know all the writings of Solomon, but I hope you do not call the 'Preacher' or the 'Song of

Songs' horrible, and wish to banish it from the canon like the old Fathers of the Church?"

"O no! I mean something quite different; my Solomon, indeed, the Presbyterians now leave to roast and steam in Hell for punishment of his prophetic zeal; what grimaces he will make! I will be with you again, gentlemen, in a minute," she took a light from the table and went out, singing as she went.

"What a wonderful, enigmatical girl!" said Kerkering, as he sat near Spinoza in the darkness. "She is as learned as if she had ten Professors in her pocket. When I hear her talk like that, I feel as if—as if—I don't know what; I would rather be quite still, and only wish that she would go on talking for ever. I cannot keep up with her, you are the man for her."

"Are you of that opinion too?" responded Spinoza, and a light broke in on the darkness to Kerkering.

"'The people that walked in darkness saw a great light;' how does pathos suit me, Herr von Spinoza?" said Olympia, entering with a large book

under her arm. "Please excuse me, I did not see that Cecilia had gone away, or I would not have left you in darkness."

"A double light appears with you," said Kerkering, perhaps referring to Spinoza's late disclosure. Olympia thanked him and opened the book.

"I think I have found something in which I can still be your teacher. Know then, that King James I. of England was called Solomon the Wise, and here is his horrible canonical treatise, '*De peccato mortali fumandi Nicotianam.*' Are you ready for death, Herr von Spinoza?"

She then read a passage from the book.

"If the pious King had only known," said Olympia, "that now a man would rule over England, named Oliver Cromwell, who carries his Bible in his sword-hilt, and yet commits the deadly sin of smoking cigars all day long! I am delighted, however, to have found your weak point at last."

"You knew that long ago," replied Spinoza, and Kerkering nodded, and bit his lips in mental assent.



"You are very unjust to music," said Olympia, "when you compare it with your hobby. Your Descartes knew that music gave us many problems to solve; his book '*Compendium musices*' fascinated me very much. But the creation of music and its effects cannot be calculated and demonstrated in numbers. And yet music has some resemblance to mathematics, in that men created numbers, which did not exist in the world, but were imagined; and men created music to which there was no parallel in the known world."

"The sounds we hear?"

"They have nothing to do with it. That men created and imagined a whole kingdom of inexhaustible sensations by tones, makes music a miracle of the human mind as much as mathematics."

"Music moves in a course uncircumscribed by fixed definitions," remarked Spinoza.

"How cold that sounds! When I shut my eyes, and listen to good music, I best comprehend myself, and men and circumstances that were before confused become clear to me. Imagine in harmony

the spectacle of an endless succession of imprisoned and struggling souls, of whom some complain, sigh, and bewail, while others carol, cheer, languish, and storm; soon they are united, and in infinite variety express the same thought, then are mute; again one awakes, rises, and dies gently and happily; a band again join and rage and roar, the others hasten past, the dead are aroused, till at last peace settles on all." •

"Your explanation is so imaginative," said Spinoza, "that it convinces me more than ever that music is the art of the emotions, and, indeed, moves in the sensations like elements without a definite object. Anger, pain, and joy, hate and love are evinced as elementary sensations without a tangible object. I will not reject such absorptions, but I find it enough to do to understand the sensations which are tangible, and thereby if possible to control them."

"And I tell you," maintained Olympia, "your whole philosophy is a philosophy of music. O, if I could only express what I mean properly. You once explained to me, that the peace of society

depended on each one resigning, for reciprocity's sake, something of the natural rights in accordance with which man may do all that he is able, that self-preservation may become the protection of all. Now that is the law of musical harmony. One note, struck alone, would be quite different and sharply defined; but if it passes into harmony, it must resign somewhat of its nature, that the notes may flow into harmony with one another, 'one after another rising and falling.'

Spinoza looked at Olympia with sparkling eyes. How she treasured his words, and sought to bring them within her own mental sphere. He had no time to follow out his thought, that this view might be applied to their personal connection; for after a pause Olympia continued with this strange digression.

"I cannot help being annoyed that, while such extraordinary progress has been made in your art that the stars can be brought quite close to our sense of sight, why have not instruments been made to strengthen our hearing? How glorious it would be if we could hear the music of the spheres that Dante describes so divinely."

"If we accepted it as a fact that the stars move with rhythmical sound, it would do but little for our intelligence to hear them."

"Intelligence then is the measure of everything? Is not enjoyment desirable in itself? You must confess, that no regular movement exists without rhythmical sound; from which I have drawn a very odd conclusion, which I will tell you, if you will promise not to laugh at me."

"I promise that, for I am curious to hear what conclusion seems so odd to you."

"Half a year ago, my father told me that an English physician, named William Harvey, had discovered the circulation of the blood and its laws; I am convinced that as the movement of the heart makes a sound that we can hear, the movement of the blood in our veins must make a sound too, but one which we can very seldom hear. In times when we are perfectly healthy we are in perfect harmony, in times of sickness we are discordant. I told my father that the ringing we have in our ears must surely be a note that has broken loose from the general harmony; my father considers rather

that it was an acoustic illusion when we thought we heard such sounds, but I cannot accept that view. You see there is really a great truth contained in the common saying that we can hear the grass grow; all through nature there is regular movement of moisture, and wherever there is movement there is sound and tone. Among the stars, in the depths of the earth, and on the surface, there is an eternal murmur and swell and clash: Music is the soul of the universe, is our soul; all is in million-voiced harmony, and the articulation given to man is its divinest revelation."

Olympia's expression of countenance grew brighter and brighter, and Spinoza said:

"You see I do not laugh at you, I am glad you evaded so well your father's view of it, which yet you so nearly agreed with. I will not allow myself to judge so hastily of your theory."

"Why must men's partialities be so different that they can hardly understand one another?" asked Olympia, and Spinoza replied:

"So that we should only try to convince each other on merely intellectual subjects; where this

ends persecution for heresy begins. You are certainly right in your own appreciation of music, and in your love of it; but music is an example of how in matters of faith, of imagination in a word, where no fixed definition is afforded by intellectual proof, fanaticism and persecution so readily prevail. Men always become passionate where they are conscious of incapacity, and force an outward observance of what is only an internal law, an internal duty. Do not be led into taking me for a heretic to music, and banishing me from your sanctuary."

Kerkering quickly took advantage of this turn of the conversation to ask Olympia to go to the organ; Spinoza also expressed the same desire, and it was soothing and refreshing to their overwrought minds to listen to the tones that Olympia drew, now swelling, now softly sinking, from the instrument.

It was late in the evening when Spinoza and Kerkering left. The peculiarities of character in the two lovers were plainly expressed in the fact that Olympia, fascinated by the flow of musical sound, gave herself up unrestrainedly to her feel-

ings, and there felt the freedom of unrestrained existence: while the philosopher's task, and Spinoza's natural, ruling inclination was, unmisled by the stormy power of the sensations, not to let these deadening forces influence him, but to recognise their perpetual laws, and meanwhile to preserve amid all disturbances that equanimity which alone meant freedom to him.

A trifling physical peculiarity, but one which evinced a deeper tendency of disposition, might be recognised in the fact that Olympia's eyelids often blinked, while Spinoza's look was as open and steady as a child's.

It has not been yet investigated what relation such physical features have to the whole vitality and movement of the mind. May we found this observation on the case of Spinoza and Olympia, that, while the one, musical by nature, was animated momentarily by harmonious sound, the other had a steadily speculative or, as Oldenburg termed it, a plastic nature?

These diversities in their natures formed their complement and a continually growing fascination.

Whether in constant association these differences would always be as easily accommodated or not; or whether it was the duty of one whose mission was independent and all-embracing thought, to live apart from every narrowing association in the region of pure intellect? These questions were for the time suppressed, for Spinoza had to show in other ways how far he already controlled his emotions.

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## CHAPTER XI.

## MISSIONARIES.

THE holy Jewish Church could not with indifferent eyes see one who belonged to her by birth and ritual wilfully break loose from her; she knew well enough that, if individuals were permitted to separate and live according to their own inclinations, the original Jewish tabernacle would in the future stand deserted, and no one would be found to take it on his shoulders and bear it from land to land, fixing its pillars in all kingdoms of the earth. Where men are allowed to be merely men, the gigantic edifice of the Church is tottering. The lords of the Christian church, as well as of the Jewish, who call themselves servants recognise this. The Jews had no State, what would be left to them if they had no Church, no Synagogue?

The Synagogue keeper, Elaser Merimon, whom we have before seen in company with the Cabbalist,

had already been to Spinoza three times, and commanded him in the name of the Beth-Din\* to return to the congregation, and in meat and drink, as well as in attendance at the Synagogue, to live after the precepts of the Jewish religion; he had refused to obey these commands, and the lesser excommunication was passed, which banished him for three months from the Jewish Church. Though he had already condemned himself to this penalty, he entered a protest against the sentence, because his manner of life was not radically in opposition to Judaism, and he pledged himself to prove the illegality of the ceremony. His protest, however, was in vain, and he thought no more about it, for he recognised only one ban, that which could banish him from the presence of Olympia. His two brothers-in-law then came, and reminded him that he must return to the bosom of the Church. He put them off with a quiet smile; but they became more and more violent, abused, and cursed him, and threatened to tear him in pieces if he did not avert the shame of his manner of life from his relations.

\* Ecclesiastical Court.

Spinoza's Spanish blood boiled, but even then he suppressed all explosion of wrath. The threats and blustering seemed to him only immaterial opposition, which he could have pictured to himself. With measured speech and kinsmanlike behaviour, in so far as was consistent with independence, he drew the limits; he taught their violence that external behaviour could not bind, and external force not convince. His words must have contained convincing proofs, for the two looked at each other in mute astonishment, and left him. A few days afterwards, however, on the Sabbath, Spinoza was surprised by another visitor, a woman, carrying a baby, hardly a year old, in her arms, and leading a little girl by the hand. Spinoza advanced kindly towards her:

"I am glad you have come to me, dear Miriam," he said, "but how you have aged, are you ill, or in trouble?"

"I am quite well, God be praised!" answered Miriam sighing, "and could not complain otherwise. Yes, dear brother, 'marrying is marring,' two bad confinements, thirteen weeks in bed, and the household going to ruin all the time; no rest at night

with the children, and trouble and care the whole year round—you would not laugh at me now for looking too often in the mirror, often I never look in it from one Sabbath to another.”

“I am very sorry that I have seen so little of you, or been able to help you so little; but leave the cares behind now,” said Spinoza, “they will soon be less. You can hardly think what an infinite pleasure it is to have you with me again. Relations are naturally the best friends. Do you remember old Chaje’s proverb? ‘Bind me hand and foot, and throw me among my people, that will always be true.’”

“Ay! you will be thrown nicely among your people. Oh God! from the way you go on we cannot see you without blushing. Do you know what is happening to-day? To-day you are summoned the second time in the Synagogue; perhaps at this very moment in which we are speaking. A week ago I was in the Synagogue; my heart is so heavy, it seems as if a hundredweight lay on it. When we had all risen,\* Rabbi Isaak Aboab (who gives himself great airs since he returned from Brazil) went to

\* For the Thora to be replaced.

the altar; all were still, and looked to see what he would do next, he called on your name, and commanded you to return, if you would not have heaven's lightnings smite you, or the earth swallow you up. Dear brother, I thought my heart would be torn out; I turned icy cold, and then flames seemed to be before my eyes; I thought I should fall down, and grasped the railing; I fainted time after time, I don't know how I found strength to go home; Esther de Leon, who stood near me, went home with me. You know she is a malicious, mocking thing, but she ought to be silent, for she was once Acosta's betrothed, and you are not as bad as he yet, thank God!"

"No, and will never be."

"But it is bad enough now," began Miriam again, "to-day is the second time, and in a week you will be summoned for the third time, and then—I shall never survive the shame of it. My husband will order me to forget that you ever were my brother—and how can I do that? It seems you could, for if you can forget your religion, why should you not forget your sister."

Miriam with these words looked at her brother's agitated face, she seemed sorry to have given him so much pain, and continued weeping:

"Day and night you are always in my mind, I forget my duties as mother and wife, and it is all your fault, it is the thought of your disregard of duty that makes me do it. I cannot think what makes you so obstinate, but I know this: if my son should one day cause such trouble to his sisters, I would rather he should die before he learnt to speak."

"You must not say so, dear sister; I hope all will come right yet. Does not your husband know you have come to me?"

"He must not know a word of it. Only think, he wanted me to go to the Synagogue this morning, but, God forgive me! I would rather go to the gallows; the women would look at me, and whisper and giggle together. I said I should be obliged to stay with the children, and came to you; Rebecca stayed at home too, but she has not dared to come with me, her husband is too stern. I cannot see, though, why you will not return. You know, I do not care about trifles, and do not condemn you like

the others; but the life you lead now, you could lead just as well if you lived like other Jews. If you don't want to go three times to the Synagogue, you can go once, and that cannot be much trouble to you; you see, you would still have to live, if God forbid it! you were shut up in a House of Correction; would it not be much worse? No Sabbath, no holiday, what would you live for? I entreat you to come back, let other people trouble themselves about what belongs to religion, and what not. I believe you are right in many things, and I will listen to you in secret, if you must confide in someone; but what is the use of letting all the world know? I know well enough you men will not put up with things that we women must bear and endure; but you, you are quite different; from childhood you always gave up to others willingly. Be what you used to be again; believe me, you cannot be otherwise, it will break your heart to try any other rule. Control yourself now rather, and come back. O God! if you were with us again, we should be as happy and as much respected as we ever were. I will read your wishes in your eyes, I

will lay my hands under your feet; with lifted hands I entreat you to come back to us."

Spinoza with difficulty mastered his agitation sufficiently to explain to his sister that he was fully determined to defend himself against the Rabbis, that they might not succeed in degrading either himself or his family; he would not merely break their power in his own case, but in that of others also in which they would have put free thought under a ban.

"I believe it, I believe it!" cried Miriam enthusiastically, "you only want what is right, you are better than all the rest of the world. But believe me too, I have learnt to know mankind since this misfortune has come through you. You wish to offer yourself as sacrifice for others? You are too good, you are the crown of mankind, the others are not worthy that a hair of your head should be injured for them."

Spinoza was deeply moved as he looked at his sister, who loved him so well that for his love's sake she rejected all others. Miriam might have



known the movement of his heart, for, with a wail of grief, she threw herself on his neck and cried,

"You cannot and you must not for the world's sake offer up yourself and us too. Or is it true that you wish to wed a Christian?"

Spinoza was in a painful dilemma. To lie was as foreign to his nature, as night to day, and yet he hesitated how to explain to his sister that his intellect had led him over the boundaries of church dogmas, whither love was his only guide.

An unexpected circumstance freed him from the necessity of further explanation. The two children, seeing their mother crying on their uncle's neck, began to cry and scream also, so that Miriam forgot her question in pacifying her children.

"Benjamin," she said to the boy, who was first pacified, "Benjamin, entreat your uncle not to leave us. Ah, the child has our late father's name, who would weep and wail too if he saw you; he cannot rest quietly in his grave, if he hears what has become of you." Spinoza took the boy in his arms, and embraced and kissed him.

"As little as this child condemns me, as little

would my father condemn me in eternity," he said. Little Sarah, too, played with her uncle's hand, and asked him, on her mother's bidding, to go with them. Spinoza repeated his assurance that he could defend himself; and Miriam, with a heavy heart, took her children away with her.

He had to sustain another conflict on account of his decision that day. Towards evening Rodrigo Casseres came to him.

"You have no father now," he said, "I must take his place. Do you remember the time you saw me first? You too will have a cur's burial, like that renegade. Do you remember the evening when I told you of your uncle Geronimo's dreadful death? You too will die like that, only more God-forsaken, more torn by the devil, for you have trodden down the creed of your father's of your own free-will. Your father, I, and all of us, for what have we staked our lives day after day? For the holy faith of our fathers. Why have we left our beautiful native land, and wandered into far countries? That we might openly serve our faith in peace; and you reject it of your own free-will;

I warn you while there is yet time; you are young now, but when you approach your end, your treachery will follow you when you wake, and murder your sleep."

Spinoza had regard to the man's age, and quietly represented to him his firm decision and his innocence.

For a week he was free from attempts at conversion, and during this time he worked out a plan of defence, and while employing for this purpose the authority of the Sacred Scriptures, he formed new conclusions, and became more firm and decided in those he had long ago formed. What had been suppressed in the development of silent thought, whether by innate shyness, or under cover of stated facts, now shot up with renewed strength in the hot conflict of defence. Spinoza, too, now felt that warlike spirit, that concentrated power which strengthens ordinary forces, and makes them rise above themselves.

For the next exhortation which was addressed to him, he did not require this power.

On the Sabbath, as he sat at table enjoying his

simple mid-day meal, he heard some one heavily mounting the stairs, the door opened, and old Chaje entered the room. Spinoza drew a chair to the table for her, and asked,

“Have they sent you out too, to bring back the lost sheep to the flock?”

“No, as true as I wish God may let me see joy in him again, I came here of my own wish. I thought my old legs would break before I got up the stairs. I did not believe any of them. I wanted to hear with my own ears if it were true that he would reject our holy religion; he was once a brave, pious, Jewish child.”

Spinoza remarked in silence the influence that the report spread about him must have had, for old Chaje in her zeal almost forgot his presence, and appeared to talk to herself about him.

“Who knows that?” asked Spinoza.

“Who knows it? A fine secret! The children in the street talk about it. Oh Lord! how often have I carried him in my arms, who would have thought then, that he could become such a one as this? What is true, is true; the sister of Black

Gudul, who was servant at Rabbi Aboab's, said long ago, Baruch was a hypocrite; where he will be the Rabbi, the congregation will get baptised. I always thought, if I should close my eyes after living over a hundred years,—I have neither kith nor kin in the world, more's the pity,—I would leave Baruch my little bit of fortune that I have saved up, and that he would have said prayers for my soul; that I too might have a silver chair in Gan-Eden.\* Ah! my wishes and hopes have melted away."

Chaje wept bitterly, Spinoza tried to console her.

"He leads me too into sin by making me weep on the Sabbath; it has knocked another nail in my coffin," she wailed, "I would like to know what he can be thinking of. Has the Jewish religion been right for so many thousand years that it should be thrown aside now like a broken pot? He must be possessed, I do believe, why should he have abused the Jews and the Jewish religion? 'Cut off your nose and spite your face,' the proverb says. He will try and please me, and be good and pious again, won't he? He will surely thank me on his

\* Paradise.

death-bed, when he follows me. It was only youthful folly, and that is soon forgotten. The grass need only grow over it a year, and then he might choose among the daughters of the richest men in Amsterdam."

Spinoza was nearly powerless against old Chaje's talk; on her no explanation had any effect, she would not go away until he had promised to be pious and good again; at last he had to give her plainly to understand that she must take her departure. Olympia prophesied aright when she said pilgrimages would one day be made to Spinoza, but the pilgrimage was first made to Maledictus. The day after Spinoza had got rid of old Chaje, the physician Solomon de Silva came to him. He began with professional enquiries, and told Spinoza that his present way of life was undermining his health; but he replied, that two of his friends were physicians, that he observed diet, and was always fairly well. Silva then drove his probe deeper.

"I confess," he said, "that Judaism contains many abuses and abnormal developments which ought to be got rid of; when I was your age, it

used to weigh on my mind too. The impetuosity of youth always wants hastily to cut away what displeases it, but that will not do; men must first win respect and confidence, and not shock people; then later on something may be permitted to you, and you can carry out your plans by degrees."

"The Talmud teaches that you should keep no false measures in your house," answered Spinoza. "Does that not refer here?"

"In any case," persisted the physician, "time and opportunity are to be considered, these every day conditions have at least their natural rights as much as abstract logical thoughts. •The first rule is, that whoever wishes to influence any association, and work seasonable and reasonable reforms, must never place himself outside that association. Therefore, I counsel you to return; remember, there are other people who have seen the light of reason, but who do not care to overthrow the old observances all at once. Much has happened latterly for the suggestion of which any one would have been stoned fifty years ago, and it

is ever so with progress. You see, our whole Low-country home is a type of our religion. Dams are built, canals dug, to bind and restrain the wild power of the elements; on these dams life again appears, and the canals become connecting roads which hold men together. The power of centuries lies in these wise precautions. Common men even will keep this land sacred, because they know that the labour of races past away has wrung it from the sea. If any one should come and find a better, must he pierce the dams, destroy the work of his forefathers, and for a short time annihilate fruitful fields, and populous villages and towns, now built on dry land? It is thus with our religion. Do not tear down the dams. Do not! If you return, there are many clear heads with whom, perhaps indeed at their head, you can help to reform Judaism."

"Who told you I wanted to do so? Perhaps Judaism is nothing more to me than its offshoot Christianity, a development of mind followed by others. In the first place I want nothing but to retain my independent life, and in that the power of no Rabbi shall hinder me."



"Have you forgotten," asked Silva, "what you told me when we came to this room for the first time with your late father? The time may come when you will feel deserted by all who belong to you by bonds of kindred and religion; you will stretch out your hands to them, and grasp nought but empty air. I know too well, how far your free thought has carried you; I do not believe you will turn Christian. Trust my experience, if you reach the highest point of free-thought, and have shaken off all prejudice or doctrinal peculiarity, you are, and will always remain, a Jew to them; they will always look upon you as a foreigner. They have imbibed hatred and aversion to the Jews with their mothers' milk; you waste your love on them. What good they may discover in you, they will set down as exceptional; if you strive for wealth and honour, they will say it is Jewish avarice and ambition; if you hold both cheap, they will say: he has acquired a little Christian modesty and scorn of worldly wealth. They will think you charming and inimitable if you mock at Jewish folly; but if you attack one of their own prejudices, even if they

themselves had long ago made a jest of it, you must not do it, and if you do it, you are a pert, obtrusive Jew. It is the same in this as in other things in life; we confess our faults, and blame ourselves for them; but if another does it, we are annoyed. Sooner will the heavens kiss the earth, or fire and water unite, than a Jew and a Christian embrace in true, tender, all-forgetting love and union. Ay, and if you are baptised, the first defect they discover in you, it is the old Jewish Adam appearing. So return to your own people who love you truly, and on whose neck rests the same yoke; they will receive you with brotherly love, and forget your backsliding."

"No," said Spinoza, "you have committed a sore sin against God and human nature by your words; it would be too horrible if they were true, but they are not. It is indeed possible for man to belong to man, love and comprehension are more durable than hatred and prejudice; is the human mind originally Jewish or Christian? Well! I shall see in time whether you speak the truth."

"Do not; why should you be ruined? 'Whoever

would purify himself, men will come to his help; but he who would defile himself, men let him alone,' says the Talmud. I will make you a good proposition. The congregation offer you a place in the Beth-Din; you can follow your studies undisturbed, for you have little to do there."

"I will never accept office."

"The Congregation will guarantee you a salary of a thousand gulden, on condition that 'you will promise on your honour never to write a word against Judaism."

"The proverb says: 'If the people wish to silence a man, they must stop his mouth with broth,' replied Spinoza. "It is a practical and politic method, but not applicable to my case. My dear doctor, I do not want you to be angry with me, but what are such proposals to me?"

"I only told you of them to fulfil my commission; I personally have something else to say to you. Youth will not see that there is really no such thing as absolute truth, that such a thing cannot exist in the world, because it would be tyrannically absolute. He who knows the fate of man, and has

lived a long life of his own, knows that historical truth alone is worth anything. You are too modest and humble to be a scoffer; you see, even God allows the many-sidedness of truth;—grace—”

“And my intelligence of Him obliges me to follow that perception.”

“Hold firmly to that and at the same time hold to the conditions of history. Whether you come to my conviction that no philosophy can reveal the secrets of the world further than the Jewish revelation, or whether you are of another opinion, and accept the Messianic time as one in which your absolute intellectual truth reigns; look back; if it were for nothing but the memory of the innumerable multitude who were murdered for our faith, this alone must keep us fast within its sacred walls. A religion which despises the joys of life, and teaches love of a fearful death for its sake, must it not contain the first spring of truth? Who would dam it up with a rash hand because in course of time it runs muddy? The blood of your brothers and sisters murdered in the past cries to Heaven for vengeance on you, for you defile their honorable graves by writing

on their tomb-stones that they died for illusion and error."

"I do not do so, it is calumny to say so of me: the Jewish laws are great and holy to me, in them the Godhead for those times most clearly revealed himself; blessed are they who know and live according to them; but has the Divinity since those times ceased to live in the minds of men? Are all later born races doomed to stop where the former stood, and fetter themselves with old forms? The form fades, the spirit remains eternal, renewed in youth, and increasing ever in strength."

"A powerful mind is in you," began Silva again, controlling himself, "your moderation assures me that you will be a great man. Weak natures are violent and wrathful in controversy, but never the strong. Do not throw a stone in the well you have drunk from. Your resolution to freely sacrifice all for the truth, you have inherited from the Jews. Be thankful. Show your power by self-control, be faithful to yourself and your own, and be not led away to apostacy."

"There is no apostacy but from ourselves."

"We shall all honour you, I above the rest, if you control yourself."

"And I shall be disgraced in my own eyes."

Confusion and dejection were seen in Silva's face; everything, even just appreciation of his virtue, were in vain with Spinoza. The physician rose and cried:

"Alas! you are lost. I can only pray to God to let in the light of day on you, that the *ignis fatuus* which leads you into marsh and slough may vanish."

Tears stood in Silva's eyes as he spoke; he turned and went away. Spinoza was deeply moved by the conversation, he was much pained to have so grieved the reverend old man, and not to be able to obey him; but how otherwise could he or durst he act?

It was much easier for Spinoza to dismiss the last tempter. In the afternoon Chisdai came, and as soon as he had entered the door, he threw himself on the floor, and sat as if mourning.

"What is that for?" said Spinoza.

"Alas!" cried Chisdai, muttering to the floor,

without raising his head, "has the unclean spirit in thee made thee forget everything? Do you no longer know the story of Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrkanos?"

"Very well; he wanted to prove his view of the permissible use of a baker's oven by miracles, and was excommunicated for it. No one would take him the news till Rabbi Akiba did as you are doing here. Am I not still a good Talmudist? But get up, I can neither tell a tree to place itself elsewhere, nor water, that it should flow backwards, nor the walls either, that they should bend inwards; they none of them obey me."

"So!" cried Chisdai springing up, and shaking his fist fiercely, "so you mock at the Talmud too? You see I came here in peace; I would have warned you to fear God, and showed you that I did not oppose you in jealousy or any other base passion; but words are lost on you. Go thy ways! The carrion crows beside the stream will peck out thine eyes, and the young eagles devour them."

"You can pervert the Bible like a good Talmudist as you are, the Scriptures only lay that

curse on one who mocks at, and scorns, his father and mother.”

“That you have done seventy times seven, you reprobate. But your punishment will not tarry, you will yet be stoned to death, and men will cast stones in heaps on thy carcase, for a warning to all coming generations. Take heed to thyself, if I get thee into my hands, I will tear thee as men tear fish, until thy breath can no longer poison the air.”

“Talmud again,” laughed Spinoza, “but remember, the Talmud also says: ‘It is good that the ass hath no horns.’”

Chisdai foamed at the mouth with rage, but hearing some one on the stairs he went out.

“What sort of a featherless biped is it that has just left you?” said Meyer entering, “he looks like an incarnate original sin.”

Spinoza laughed heartily at the description.

“You have ridden your hobby horse to the right post this time,” said he, “but this original sin wanted to lead me back into the Jewish paradise.”

Meyer exhorted him to oppose the Jewish Papacy



with all his usual power and firmness, and as he soon took his leave, Spinoza too went out.

For the first time he felt not at home alone within his own four walls; he found it impossible to concentrate his mind as formerly on the investigation of any particular line of thought; he needed a friendly cheerful heart with whom he could unbend, and forget the storm of the day. Where should he seek it if not with Olympia? •He went there, and found her in confidential conversation with Kerkering. He thought both looked strangely surprised when he entered, he guessed rightly that he had been the subject of their conversation.

Olympia, as usual, easily mastered her agitation.

"You appeared to me in a dream last night, Herr von Spinoza," she said in the course of conversation, "you must guess in what form."

"You believe in neither angels, nor devils; perhaps you saw me in the form of a monk?"

"No, guess again."

"An Emperor?" •

"No."

"A Rabbi? A Pope?"

"No, you are not guessing now, I know. I saw you as Masaniello, with a fishing net on your back; your red embroidered cap with the long tassel suited your coal black hair, and your sleeves were rolled up above your elbows; I saw you carried through the streets that way, by a crowd of Jews, to the new Town Hall; there you climbed up to the golden ship on the tower and cried: 'Fellow-citizens, you, who as Erasmus of Rotterdam says, live like crows on the tops of trees! I see your fork-like chimneys, and your double-faced gables, I see the canals and dams that intersect your land, and your life that flows on as much contracted, and without free tide in the preordained way. I tell you, this will all be changed. I erase the 'You should' from your book of life, and in my doctrine write it 'You must, for you can.' You think fish are mute? It is not true. I have caught a legion from the depths of the sea, who all speak wisdom.' Then you took your net from your back, it was empty; you turned it round, and an infinite number of fish fell out, they glittered beautifully in the sun, their fins became wings, and they fluttered away screaming. You however, re-

mained there, and uttered a Philippic against the legend that, on the day on which the envoys of the seven United Provinces should go through the seven doors of the finished Town Hall, the good-fortune of each province would desert it, and never return. And then you explained, how your philosophy corresponded with the water communication of our land; how they could break and control storms and tides; how men could drain flooded land from the stream of sensations, and make it dry and fertile; everything was perfectly clear, I understood it quite well in my dream. Now I am unfortunately as unphilosophical again as the *grauw*—the crowd—who roared and shrieked: ‘He is a wizard, he is a son of the Devil!’ and pulled down the Town Hall. I awoke. If you only possessed some of Daniel’s art!”

Spinoza asked if she had spoken to Frau Gertrui lately; Olympia protested she had not seen her for several weeks. It was really a strange coincidence, for Spinoza had two days ago begun the odd freak of drawing his own portrait as Masaniello. He told Olympia nothing of this, because he knew

that she was much given, in spite of her free-thinking opinions, to building up wonderful theories of premonition. To-day, too, he did not feel at ease with her; was it the presence of Kerkering, or was it because he had come there with a full heart, and saw too late that he should find no sympathy here in his painful conflict? An undefined uncertainty and doubt pervaded his connection with Olympia; he saw that Kerkering became more and more familiar with her, and she did not, as formerly, keep him jestingly at a distance; he even thought he perceived a secret understanding between them. When he left, Olympia said:

“Your sister Rebecca came to me to-day, I was to persuade you to submit to the Rabbis.”

Spinoza bowed in silence. How could she relate her dream, and carry on such jests, instead of imparting this circumstance? Must it not have made her heart full that his sister should come entreatingly to her?—“You should not expect others to know an emotion which you suppress in yourself;”—he said to himself.

Miriam, who had lived with him in sisterly love

from childhood, came to him, and only enquired shyly about his love; while Rebecca, the domineering, who had always been estranged from him, went straight to Olympia. What must she have appeared to her, perhaps she had made his beloved one's heart doubtful, and given her a dislike to his family.

Spinoza felt his cheeks burn. He was on the point of cutting loose from all bonds of family and all chains of habit, but could never endure these to be despised.

Love and Truth should have stood by him in the conflict now opening on him. Did Truth alone remain to him?

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## CHAPTER XII.

## THE EXCOMMUNICATION.

AN innumerable crowd lined the streets, praying with folded hands to the Lord that he would protect the undertaking of their liberator. In front rode the Imperial herald with the eagle, and the soldier of God's Word followed, accompanied by travellers the same way in shining steel and gorgeous accoutrements. And when he entered the Assembly, his admirers climbed on the roofs, and filled the streets and windows, for each one esteemed himself highly favoured who caught sight of him; and when he had boldly and manfully fought the battle, he was borne home in triumph, and a voice was heard to cry: "Blessed are the hands that bear him." Thus in the year 1521 Martin Luther went to Worms, the bold champion of the freedom of the Divine Word.

It is hard to sustain a conflict with power and

custom at any time, it is painful to support it publicly; but the thousand upturned sympathetic faces are like a glory round the head of the champion, and raise his strength to be the strength of thousands; and if he finds himself overcome he has felt the blessings of innumerable hearts in whom his ideas will live. How very different it is to gird for a conflict without victory in mute obscurity.

In the year 1657 Benedict Spinoza went alone to the House of Jacob Synagogue in Amsterdam, accompanied by no one, greeted by no one; the people who knew him avoided this man, who was the firmest champion of the freedom of religious thought. He had no old written law to conquer for the world anew, he appeared as if he would deprive it of its strongest fortress, since he would have nought but the good old right of free thought.

In the Synagogue the ten Judges sat in their seats, the president being Rabbi Isaak Aboab; near him sat Rabbi Saul Morteira. Spinoza stood four paces distant from him. Rabbi Isaak Aboab rose and said,

“With the help of God we are here assembled

to declare judgment and law on thee, Baruch ben Benjamin Spinoza. Swear to us in the name of the Almighty God, that thou wilt neither deny nor conceal anything from us, and that thou wilt submit to the sentence which the Lord shall make known by our mouths."

"Deceit I know not, and lies are far from me," answered Spinoza, "I will submit to your judgment, if you judge me according to the Divine Word, and not according to the inclinations of your own hearts and the interpretations of the Rabbis."

A murmur rose in the assembly, but it could be heard that the almost universal opinion was, that the accused, by thus demurring to recognise their authority unconditionally, ought to be laid under the greater excommunication without further trial. Rabbi Saul Morteira called for silence.

"Let us see," he said, "how far the corruption of his heart goes. Say, renegade, hast thou not sinned against God in the enjoyment of forbidden meat and drink, and by labouring on the Sabbath? Hast thou not deserted the assembly of the faithful,



and defamed the sacred name of God and His laws? And it is written: 'He who profaneth the name of God in secret shall be punished openly.'"

A pause ensued, Spinoza looked down, then looking up, he replied in a calm voice,

"I can not do miracles and signs or call upon nature to stand by and witness for me; in me alone must be shown the power which proves the presence of God in every human heart. That I stand here before you, accused by you who believe another manner of life well pleasing to God, that I do not tremble and accuse myself of nought, accept as a sign of my love to God, which I consider my highest good. I defend myself only on the accusation of Sabbath breaking, because this may appear an offence against the sacred law of God in Nature. It is well and advantageous to oppressed men that they should have one day in seven for rest; and it is wise, for the privilege of humanity consists in free regulation of its powers; but who gives you the right to punish a man for a sin which he commits against himself?"

Those assembled all rose from their seats and

cried out that they would no longer listen to such blasphemy, but Rabbi Isaak Aboab said,

“Let him speak, from every word he speaks a demon rises that will cling round his soul in his extremity, and when he dies the death of a sinner, they will hang on to him, and drag him down to the pit of Hell. It is our duty to hear his whole guilt. Step forward and speak, witnesses.”

Chisdai and Ephraim advanced, the one proudly looking up, the other looking down ashamed.

“He has blasphemed God and the Prophets in our hearing, denied the angels, and mocked at the miracles; and that he has done all this I swear before the face of the Eternal God.”

“I swear too that Chisdai has spoken the truth,” said Ephraim in a low voice.

“What answer do you make?” asked Morteira, and Spinoza replied,

“I have not blasphemed the Prophets, indeed I honour them better than those who wreath their heads with the false glory of infallibility, who rob them of the divine Majesty of human greatness, and degrade them to idols. Go forth

and see, did the sun stand still in Gibeon? I have denied the angels? Has not Rabbi Joseph Albo already said openly, that belief in the existence of Angels was immaterial and unnecessary? I have mocked at the miracles! What do you accuse me of? Open at the passage where Balaam's ass speaks, and look what Ebn Ezra says there. I have blasphemed God? I pity thee that thou knowest not that no human intellect which follows its innate laws can escape him."

"Have you not said," interrupted Chisdai, "woe is me that I must speak it after you! have you not said that in the holy Scriptures many imperfect and false ideas of the nature of God are to be found?"

"I think I honour God more than you by that. Is not God called 'great' in the Bible, and is there a 'greatness' without limited extension in space? It is true the Bible can only be explained by itself, it carries the ground of its truths in itself, it will not be measured by the laws of intellect, but neither will it over-rule them. The reason God has given us, therefore, is no less divine, and can and must create its ideal of God for itself, and find in itself

what is necessary to the leading of a godly life. The Bible itself recognises this sacred right of our Reason, in recognising a godly war of life in the men who lived before the revelation on Sinai, while it detracts from the truth in the law-giving of Moses as a merely temporal revelation, by saying: 'It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.' In our reason, on the height of pure religious thought, there is our Sinai. I will faithfully and openly explain to you my views of higher things; if you refute me by reason, I will submit to you."

"You have appealed to the Holy Scriptures," cried Morteira, "woe! that thy tongue was not burnt to ashes, that thou venturedst to take its holy words thereon; what would you have with your Baal, Reason?"

"Destroy him if you can," replied Spinoza.

Rabbi Isaak Aboab had till now quietly listened to the discussion; now he rose and cried:

"The measure is full, you are all agreed with me that this Epicurean has deserved the extremest chastisement of Gehinom."

All present answered with an audible "Amen," and Aboab continued:

"Now I ask of thee, Baruch ben Benjamin Spinoza, wilt thou recant thy blasphemous words, and submit thee to the penance that is due on that account, or wilt thou that the highest curse of excommunication be passed on thee?"

"Refute me by Reason and I will recant! You will not hear me; I would answer you from the Scriptures. If you cannot hear me in this obscure Synagogue, and will not try the Truth on its just grounds, I will speak my thoughts to the whole world, where no ban reaches. I have only come to your tribunal to show you that I oppose no association that thinks it possesses the truth in its creed; but freedom of thought has its own inviolable domains. If you, as you have here accepted me, now reject me—a new day will break—"

"False prophet be silent!" thundered Rabbi

Aboab, "I ask for the second time, I ask for the third time, will you recant?"

The stillness of the grave reigned for a second in the Hall; then Spinoza looked up, and answered in a firm voice:

"I cannot, but neither can you do otherwise, I curse you not."

Rabbi Isaak Aboab tore his mantle, and Rabbi Saul Morteira took the Schofar that lay covered before him, and blew it three times, so that it echoed on all sides of the dome; the sacred ark was opened, all present arose, and Rabbi Isaak Aboab read from a parchment,—

"In the Name of the Lord of Lords  
Art thou, Baruch, son of Benjamin,  
Laid under the greater ban.  
Be thou under the ban of both laws,  
Heavenly and Earthly:  
Be banned by the saints above,  
Be banned by the Seraphim,  
Be banned by the Ophanim.  
Shut out from all communities,  
From the great and from the small.  
On thee be great and heavy plagues,  
Painful and horrible sickness;  
Thy house be a dragon's den,

And thy star vanish from above.  
 Be thou the pest and horror of men,  
 And thy carcase the food of snakes.  
 Be thou a sport unto thine enemies,  
 And the goods that thou mayest possess  
 Be the portion of strangers.  
 Before the doors of thine enemies  
 May thy children wail,  
 And because of thy life's tortures  
 Be thy children's children struck with horror.  
 Be accursed by all spirits

. . . . .  
 Michael and Gabriel,  
 Raphael and Mescharthel.  
 Be accursed of the Great God.  
 By the seventy Spirits' names,  
 Subjects to the Great King,  
 By the great seal Zartok,  
 Go to Hell like Korah's band,  
 And with trembling and quivering  
 Thy soul go out of thee.  
 God's terrors slay thee,  
 Overthrown like Achitophel  
 In the snares of thy plots.  
 Gehazi's leprosy be thine,  
 And from thy fall mayst thou never arise,  
 Where Israel's graves lie  
 Be thy grave never dug.  
 Given away to the stranger  
 Be thy wife ; in thine hour of death  
 May others defile her.—  
 This ban, and this curse

On Baruch, son of Benjamin.  
But on all Israel  
And on me rest the peace of God  
And his blessing eternally."

On this the Rabbi took the Thora from the sacred ark, unrolled it and read (Deut. xxix. 19., etc.), "And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: the Lord will not spare him; but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book, shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven." The Thora was returned to the sacred ark, the Schofar was again blown, and all those present said, turning towards Spinoza,

"Cursed be thy coming in, and cursed be thy going out."

All spat towards him, and recoiled four paces, as with unbroken firmness he left the Synagogue.

Would this exit from the accustomed sanctuary



be entrance to another, or would he never more enter a temple of stone, and outwardly prove that a free man is the temple of God?

Before the Synagogue he met Oldenburg, Meyer, and de Vries, who waited for him; they had heard of the proceedings, and waited here to protect him from the violence of the Rabbis. The friends had never yet seen Spinoza's countenance so animated as now. They went silently away with him, Oldenburg grasped his hand and pressed it.

As Spinoza passed his father's house, he heard the lamentations of his sisters; he knew they now bewailed him more bitterly than if he were dead.

Now that he had not renounced it of his own free will, now that it was torn from him, he felt doubly what it is to be cut off in youth from all that is dear and familiar in it; cutting all threads of memory, and so dismembering life, that it has no longer a connection with the past.

The saddest consciousness in the casting off of any tender relation<sup>4</sup> of life lies in this, that on both sides a piece of life is extinguished and destroyed, whose involuntary reawakening often fills us with

supernatural horror, and makes us hasten our flight to oblivion.

“So they sat down with him . . . . and none spake a word unto him; for they saw that his grief was very great.”

So it says in Job. Here too the three friends sat, and said nothing; for they saw that his grief was very great. Oldenburg quietly laid his hand on Spinoza's shoulder, as if he could support him thus, and lend him some of his own strength. He felt what must agitate the heart of his friend, for, though long absent from the congregation of the Synagogue, he must feel this rough rupture like a fatal fall, come at last; even if expected and known of for long beforehand, when death is at last brought decisively face to face, the pain is quite new, quite different.

No sound was heard. Once only Oldenburg softly, and with warning movement, spoke a few words to Meyer, when the latter had whispered something in his ear; for Meyer was inclined to treat the whole affair as hardly worth speaking of, or to make a jest of it.

Spinoza sat sunk in his own thoughts, his brow and eyes covered with his hands. The friends looked at him in silence, waiting the first word that he would say. At last he looked up, and as if answering an appeal, he said,

"No! no! they shall not oblige me to oppose them in bitterness, hatred, and injustice. This curse too is love. They would leave none to go wrong, they would frighten and chastise him who would renounce their association. And this horrible elaborate curse! If praise has its allotted forms, cursing must have them also. They cannot convert my thoughts. If I act in opposition to them, it is I no longer who live and act. No, I will live out my own life, the world shall not be my master."

"The world?" Meyer could contain himself no longer. "What have a set of Rabbis in an obscure Synagogue to do with the world? They send you into exile, into a world that is much more beautiful and greater than the one from which they banish you."

"You may be right, but remember, I received

there my deepest awakenings of pleasure and pain. There was a time when honour and dishonour there, were to me the honour and dishonour of the whole world. That is past."

"Now, my friend!" cried Oldenburg, "you will go out into the real world, into the wide, great world, and you will go with me. I must leave Amsterdam in a few days."

"You, and just now?"

"I am sent by my native town on an embassy to London. Come with me."

"What should I do there with you?"

"A great scientific society is to be founded in London. I am appointed a member, and you shall work with me."

In bright, attractive colours Oldenburg drew a picture of the great world. Honour, renown, pleasure, and enjoyment sparkled in unknown splendour; and Spinoza's countenance became suddenly brighter and happier. He saw himself in the midst of the great striving crowd, and amidst it all played a scene of domestic happiness in which Olympia ruled.

Meyer and de Vries added their persuasions; their words were hardly necessary, for what he now heard outwardly, Spinoza said to himself inwardly. He tremblingly seized Oldenburg's hand, but arrested himself hastily, and said,

"Excuse me, I must now be alone for a time."

He was left alone, and the conflict raged within him.

"But why did the friends say nothing of Olympia? Was I mistaken in thinking I perceived a certain shyness, a certain strangeness in them? To her, to her, under her eyes, the new life must begin."

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## CHAPTER XIII.

## WOONG BY PROXY.

At the time when Spinoza was leaving the Synagogue, the sacristan<sup>1</sup> was unbolting a side-door of the Catholic Church of St. John; two festively clad men came out, the one with a pale agitated face, the other laughing and gay, it was Van den Ende and Kerkering.

"I am shivering," said the latter, "I feel as if my usual clothing was torn off, and I was freezing. When I was on my knees there, abjuring the familiar if half forgotten faith, and accepting yours, my heart contracted as if icy cold, and I could hardly bring out the required words. It is a good thing that in the final carrying out of a resolution we have no alternative left."

"This nonsensical sensation," replied Van den Ende, "is nothing but the cold church and your unaccustomed position which checks your circula-

tion. Come my son; the wine which they refuse you there, and keep for themselves, is much better at other taverns. Look at the whole thing, as you have so well described it, in the light of a change of clothes; as the fashion is, you have equipped yourself for a wedding, nothing more."

Nevertheless Kerkering threw troubled glances round, he thought everyone must be looking at him to see what had happened. It was not till they turned round the Church of St. Olaves to Van den Ende's house that the colour returned to his cheeks. In the physician's study, where he drank to the new convert in "the mother's milk of *alma mater* Nature" as he called it, Kerkering was warmed by the fiery wine, and joined in the jest on the childish sensations which he had experienced.

Van den Ende sent to desire an interview with Olympia; but she sent word that she was ill in bed; he hastened to her, leaving Kerkering alone.

"My child," said the father to his daughter, "I am going on a difficult, perhaps dangerous journey. It is a comfort to me that I leave you in good care."

"May I not know where and why? Why have I lost your confidence," enquired Olympia.

"That you may not pine or be anxious unnecessarily; when it is over, you will be the first to rejoice. I must play my part on a large stage. I do not know whether it will be to laugh or weep. In any case it is worth the trouble to prepare with hat and wig. You should remember that Lucian and Democritus fit themselves with courage, as well as their more dismal gods. But you shall know everything later. Now let me talk to you as a father, as a friend. Look, I come to you in gala-dress. Say now with the Stoic to physical ill, 'I am stronger than thou.' Deck thyself likewise. 'Take this.'"

Olympia listened in astonishment to her father's voice, doubly gay in her silence, and looked wonderingly at the offered pearls.

"What is that for?" she asked.

"This bridal gift of his mother's our friend sends you as a compliment, and says, he has shed more tears for you than there are pearls in the depths of the sea."



"Did he weep? I never thought he would have done that. It was surely because he had to abjure his father's faith and accept ours."

"He did do it, my child. There was still enough stiff-necked Protestantism in him to protest against it, but it is a proof of his love. In Kerkering you restore my Cornelius to me."

"Alas!" cried Olympia, and covered her face in the pillows. After much persuasion from her father, she looked up sobbing. "We are all unhappy. My love belongs—you know, father, why need I say it? I love Spinoza, and am beloved by him with all the divine greatness of his mind, as never maiden was loved before."

Van den Ende struck his forehead with his clenched fist. He paced the room thoughtfully for a long time, then again seated himself beside his daughter's bed.

"Dear Olympia," he said, "be open with me. Have you already confessed your love?"

"Yes."

"And do you expect my consent?"

"Certainly, for your free-thinking mind can admit of no prejudices."

"I will not. Let us look at the thing openly. What do you mean to live on? You know what I have is not really my own."

"Spinoza could have a chair of mathematics or philosophy at any University."

"That is not certain, he is rejected by the Jews as an infidel, and the priests of all confessions join hands when it is worth while to put down the common enemy. He can polish glass, and you earn something with organ playing or other instruction; it might be sufficient to ward off death by starvation, and if you have even pure water for broth you can steep your philosophy in it, and it will be nutritious food; but your children unfortunately will not be satisfied therewith. Your love is nothing but a false syllogism."

"Father, you are too hard."

"I am not; on your spiritual heights, where you let yourself be fluttered round by nothing but genii who have neither bone nor marrow, anyone such as I am must appear a barbarian. You have solved

the eternal problem of human fate, and the existence of the world; what does it matter to you if your fate and the nourishment of your existence give you a new problem to solve day by day? Your souls love each other, and the dear souls, ah! they are such dear adaptable creatures that no privation is too hard for them."

"Is that the want of prejudice with which you would talk to me? Do the sacrifices which I so joyfully undertake merit such mockery?"

"You are right," replied her father, "you may marry him; I will not oppose it: the human will is his kingdom; it is also my motto. But think of one thing, how will you bear it, when your friends and acquaintances turn up their noses and titter when they see you cross the street with him. 'Look, there she goes,' they will say, 'she would have stayed a spinster, if the poor Jew, whose kin even rejected him, had not taken pity on her!' I cannot say they are wrong if they think, 'if he really loved her, he would have denied his old creed willingly, and not have waited till he was turned out;' for that is and always will be an insult in the eyes of the

world. And they will gossip further and say: 'How proud she was once, and how she looked down on us; she is lucky now, she does not want a wardrobe, the cast off dress she had ten years ago, is now her whole stock, we pity her with all our hearts.'—I know such things could not and would not shake your resolution, I only tell it you, that you may know it beforehand. I will not compare Spinoza in any way with Kerkering; his mind is great; and one minute in which your souls ring in celestial harmony together, weighs against years of self-denial, weighs against all enjoyment of earthly pleasures; you love and honour him, you admire the majestic nature of his intellect, I do not believe that he will misuse this power over you; such things seldom happen. What is he compared to Kerkering? He has sealed his love by going over to your church, he has left a powerful and honourable association; he has not made you a partaker in the painful preliminaries, nor laid any responsibility on you that you might receive the fruit of his work without personal trouble, and it is thus that he will always act. You will be bound by no

gratitude for his acts, he makes no pretension but that he loves you. He adores you, all your words are oracles to him; the lightest wish of your heart is a command to him which he fulfils with joy; but you are right, you would not have a husband whom you could rule; the wife's fairest ornament is obedience, obedience even to tyrannical oppression. What can Kerkering offer you? Nothing but a good, faithful heart that beats only for you; he can give you a life amid brilliant society, honour, and pleasure; you will be an object of envy to all your friends. But what is all this to the enjoyment of perfect intellectual harmony? Truly, it is eternal, and your eternity will outlast a year, may be two; is not that enough?"

Van den Ende was silent, Olympia no longer wept and sobbed; she dreamily played with the pearls that lay before her.

"Can I get up?" she enquired at last.

"Certainly," said the father, and smiled contentedly to himself as he left the room.

Olympia rose and dressed.

"I made out my love to be stronger than it is,

to my father," she said to herself. "Was it not in the beginning mere wounded self-love and desire to see no man unconquered that threw me into his arms?—No, I loved him formerly, and I love him yet." She took the pearls, clasped them round her neck, and looked at herself, well pleased, in the mirror. "'I should not have found another husband,' they will say; what does that matter to me? My own consciousness tells me, these pearls, and with them a life of brilliant enjoyment, was in my hand, and I despised it all. But am I right to do it? He is a born hermit, knowledge is his goddess; I only free him, I give him back himself, if I deny him my hand. No, this glitter dazzles my eyes. And yet, may not his strong mind behave differently when, safe in possession of me, he has no longer to woo for my favour? He knows I feel small beside him; how often has he tutored me, and will he not do it in another sense then? No, he is kind and good, but I am too weak, and Kerker's submissive adoration has fascinated me."

She laid the pearls down, and paced the chamber thoughtfully. Again she stood before the mirror

and gazed into it dreamily and absently; she saw herself pining, ragged, muddy, and laughed at, go through the streets; she only banished this maddening vision with a forced song. When her father heard her so gay, he entered the room.

"Kerkering," said he, "is waiting outside, he will not move from the spot until he receives the decisive 'Yes' or 'No.' I believe I know your thoughts, I will not try to influence your decision, but I may be able to help you. Come with me."

Olympia clung to her father as if in childlike obedience and humility, and intimated that she complied with his wishes; in this compliance lay a half unconscious obstinacy, thinly covered by an appearance of humility. Her father took her hand, and led her into the other room to Kerkering, saying:

"Here I bring your bride, my son."

Kerkering took a diamond ring from his finger, and placed it on Olympia's.

"Mine for ever!" he said, and impressed a warm kiss on her lips. In the same hour that Spinoza struggled with the temptations of a life of

honour and pleasure, Olympia also had fought with temptation and succumbed.—

Kerkering and his bride sat that evening in confidential discourse, Van den Ende rubbed his hands, and smiled as he paced the room. Olympia felt more and more at ease in Kerkering's company, indeed she found him so amiable, that she blamed herself for not having given him her heart long before. Kerkering told her that he had bought a well broken in riding horse for her, and that again, as years before, she should sit proudly in her saddle, and ride through the streets with him. He spread a brilliant life of pleasure in entrancing colours before her eyes, Olympia's cheeks flushed rosy-red, her heart beat loudly, Kerkering held her in his embrace. At an unusual hour, and with unusual gravity Spinoza entered. Olympia tore herself from Kerkering's arms; for a second she pressed her hands to her eyes, then stood up and advanced to Spinoza.

"I know you do not like scenes any more than I," she said with a trembling voice, "I have no concealments from my father and Kerkering; we did love each other. Remember that sacred hour



when you conjured me to forget what we were and wished to be. Now that time is come. Herr Kerkering is my betrothed."

She was obliged to support herself by her organ. Spinoza stood as if spell bound before her, gazing at her.

"I entreat you," began Olympia again, "do not withdraw your friendship from me."

"I hope, Herr Kerkering may afford' you the happiness that I myself in happier hours hoped to be able to offer you," answered Spinoza in a hoarse voice. He stayed for some time, spoke on indifferent subjects, and with an amount of humour which they had not perceived in him before. Though deception was so foreign to his nature, he was here entangled in a double net-work of it. He hoped by his equanimity to make Olympia's part easier to her, and made it more difficult; he thought it owing to his self-respect to remain longer that he might take leave quietly; but truly it was because it was so painful to him to tear himself away for ever from the charming surroundings in which the best joys of love had bloomed for him.

Oldenburg came too, and for the first time kissed Spinoza when he heard what had taken place.

Kerkering was in overflowing spirits, and jestingly said that he was only born that day, and Olympia must sing him a cradle-song. Oldenburg asked for the song of the "Maid under the Lime trees." Olympia objected, but Kerkering too insisted on that particular one; he desired it as the first and only compliance of his new life, and pressed on all sides, Olympia unwillingly sat down to the organ, and sang:—

"A maiden should right early rise  
To seek where her beloved one lies;  
Beneath the lime trees she sought him,  
But found not her love where she thought him.

"A knight came riding that way to see.  
'What do you here alone?' said he,  
'Count you the greenest branches,  
Or the golden, yellow roses?'

"'I count the greenest branches not,  
And I pluck the golden roses not.  
By my lover I am forsaken,  
No tidings my ears awaken.'

"'Art thou by a lover forsaken?  
No tidings your ears awaken?

In Zealand's vales he doth rest him,  
Where other fair dames have caressed him.'

“‘In Zealand's fields he doth rest him,  
Where other fair dames have caressed him,  
I pray that Heaven his guard may be  
Among those ladies fair and free.’

“‘What took he then from his arm so bold?  
A chain it was of red, red gold.  
‘Fair child, this chain will I give you,  
Forget you the love who did leave you.’

“‘And were the chain but once so long,  
That it hung from Heaven to Earth along,  
Much rather I would it should fail me,  
Than love for another avail me.’

“‘But the blood of the knight was fiery too,  
‘Fair child,’ he cried, ‘take heed what you do,  
You are my true, and rightful wife,  
No other shall be my own for life.’”

The last notes had not died away when Spinoza took his hat and departed. Olympia rose and closed the key-board of the organ so that the pipes rattled together. With overflowing heart, thus in need of the sympathy of others, Spinoza had come to Olympia. There are times, when those to whom

temples of stone are closed must worship in the temple of a faithful human heart.

The fate of Spinoza had thus directed him to seek happiness in himself alone.

He might well have consoled himself in that there was now no necessity for him to bow the mind trained to truth alone to any form accepted by others, and be taught by daily labour and daily care to silence and conceal his convictions; he might well have comforted himself in that a love was annihilated with which he had so often struggled painfully; but it is ever an enigma of love that it longs for lost pain, lost desire. Bitterness and depression sought to seize on him, but in self-controlled wisdom he learnt to impart to his mind ever more steadfastly, that peace of mind which is freedom of mind, in that it submits to the necessity of events, and follows their laws as if the heart itself had no concern in them. That abandonment to a grief whose painful effects can be conquered by reason, is partial suicide; he who would be free, that is, would live according to the laws of reason, must never cease to be; and he permits

this, his living eternal self-existence, to be interrupted, if he allows himself to be overwhelmed by his sensations. Only a life according to reason is the true eternal life.

It was a hard conflict, a breaking loose from all special pleasures and all flattering demands, which should at last lead him to the summit of pure intellect, and enabled him to express this sentence, almost incomprehensible to us, which apparently despises the world, and yet glorifies it:

“I would investigate the acts and efforts of men as though they were lines, planes, or bodies,”

His friends observed Spinoza's victorious self-control with surprise and admiration; by free thought he had conquered life with all its casualties, and now in quiet peace of mind he might first call it really his own.

No glory surrounded his head, but it illuminated his whole being.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

## SCARS AND PURIFICATION.

THE Jewish Church wished to follow up its excommunication with civic consequences, and petitioned the magistrates to banish the "Blasphemer" from the city. The affair was laid before the synod of the reformed ministry for decision, and the quiet thinker often found himself distracted from his investigations by citations and writs. With profound reflections on the regulation of the commonwealth, and the consumption of human material required by it, he often wandered through the long passages of the Law courts, or sat waiting in the ante-rooms. The martyrdom of the modern world is composed of a long array of thousands of trifling annoyances, and our Philosopher had yet more to experience.

His friends pressed him to leave his native land of his own free-will: he, however, maintained that for justice' sake he must submit himself to the

judgment of the laws appealed to. It was Oldenburg's last act of friendship, when sent to England as the envoy of the Lower Saxon Union, to free his friend from these annoyances. He repeatedly entreated Spinoza to follow him, but Spinoza wished to remain in his quiet seclusion in his native land. But he now prepared to leave Amsterdam, for, though he was free from all anger, he could not always suppress the sudden emotion which often agitated him so painfully at seeing himself surrounded by dislike and avoidance in his native place. It was more painful to him innocently to raise this feeling in others, than to bear its consequences himself.

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The peculiarities of the friends showed themselves in these discussions in a characteristic manner. Meyer found extreme pleasure in lashing the transgressions, the narrowness, the stupidity of men with his sharp satire; Oldenburg declined this means, because any violent opposition, all hand to hand conflict with the common herd, appeared to him unlovely and unclean; and thus Spinoza and Oldenburg often agreed. What the other totally

avoided from a certain feeling for harmony, Spinoza reasoned out for himself on a foundation of knowledge.

"The investigation of the incongruities and failings of mankind," he said, "can only serve to teach us not to be carried away by controversy, but rather to quietly work out our own laws of action, and conquer the violence of our tempers in the shortest possible time. It is an illusion if men think to make themselves free and happy by finding out the deficiencies and deformities of others, and variously remarking thereon. The recognition of virtue and its causes alone makes us satisfied and happy; in that alone can our hearts rejoice. The ambitious man speaks most willingly of the false reputations and base means of others; the avaricious spendthrift, of the misuse of money and the vices of the rich. He who loves truth does not dwell long on lies and obduracy; he combats them to the best of his ability, rejoices in his own acquired knowledge, and admits that those in error also act according to the necessities of their nature."

"Happiness always lies on the other shore,"



added Oldenburg, "but on the other shore of conquered hate, in the serene peace of knowledge."

Meyer was, nevertheless, not so easily converted, and with the self-congratulation of having prophesied aright, he asked:

"In Olympia you have probably seen the want of character and merely receptive capacity of woman's nature, and will give this variety of human-kind its suitable place in your system."

"I know," replied Spinoza, "that he who is crossed in love thinks of nothing but the untrustworthiness, the falsity, and all the other oft repeated defects of women; and all this he as quickly consigns to oblivion when he is again taken into favour by the beloved one. But whoever tries to regulate his sensations and desires only by his love of freedom will endeavour to acquaint himself with their virtues and the causes thereof as thoroughly as possible, and to fill his mind with the joy which only springs from true knowledge. Whoever observes this diligently, for it is not difficult,—and then practises it, will best regulate his actions according to the law of reason."

Thus the friends raised and animated each other in their penetration of the nature of intellect and investigation of its laws of action and Spinoza had in his own life proof sufficient of the theory which he maintained with irrefutable reasoning, that the passions alone disturb the Universal well-being and the internal harmony of the individual; but Reason reconciles them.

This pleasant lively intercourse was interrupted by Oldenburg's departure for England. Spinoza, Meyer, and de Vries accompanied him to Schreyers-toren (the weeping gate), which takes its name from the tears of the deserted for the departure of their friends. With a heavy heart Spinoza tore himself from his friend's arms, and watched him sadly as the waves bore him away. Meyer and de Vries yet remained to him, but the one was too young to be wholly his friend, their age and experience were too unequal; the other was married. A hundred relations and circumstances make it impossible for a husband and father to devote himself to a friend with the same undivided attention; in Oldenburg he had lost his most faithful friend.

As he returned alone over the Amstel bridge, he met a funeral procession; among the mourners he recognised his former master and fellow-workmen; one of them beckoned him to go with them, he joined the train and learnt that they were bearing Peter Blyning to the grave. On the last harvest-home he had been at a dance with his comrades; his companions, in jest, sent all the girls to him, one after the other, to ask him to dance; he could hardly contain himself for rage and mortification; he poured wine and gin into a glass one after the other, and drank them off. Then weeping bitterly he took his crutches, and went out. Suddenly a terrific shriek was heard, and they all hastened out; Peter, having fallen down the steps, and fractured his scull, lay there in his last agony.

Spinoza followed the procession much moved. On the way he encountered Chisdai. When he came near him, he saw Chisdai spit towards him three times, and say the Hebrew words: "But thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it; for it is a cursed thing" (Deut. vii. 26.). Spinoza took no notice, and, sunk in his own thoughts, ac-

accompanied the corpse of the unhappy man to its last resting place.

That evening he received another agitating visit. Closely wrapped in his mantle de Silva came to him, and in a stern voice began without other greeting:

"It is not as the Jew that I come to you, he knows you no more. The physician stands before you; his calling is to help all, to advise without question whomsoever it may be. I counsel you, leave your native town, danger menaces you. Your heart is sick as long as you are here. No man can bear to wander among his own people, thrust forth from them like a corpse, by those with whom he once, lived in fellowship. I know you do not mean to insult those who take your continued stay as an insult. And one thing more. Ephraim Cardoso has joined another party of emigrants for Brazil, Chisdai wished to join them, but they refused him. No one will associate with him, he is avoided like one plague-stricken; no one will forgive him for being your accuser."

"But I forgive him."

"That does not help him, nor does it help you. I am afraid he broods over a dreadful deed; for he seldom leaves home in the day time, but sneaks out at night. Let me warn you, I do it in kindness to you. Ay, I will recall my words, and say I come to you as a Jew. You have not scoffed at our religion before the Sanhedrim, you have spoken as beseemed a thinker. I myself will have nought to do with thought that is not founded on faith; but a Jew appeals to you; be just to us, as to others. You are more pious than you let yourself appear, than your reason permits you to confess."

"Is faith then the only form of piety?"

"I know, I know," continued Silva hastily, "I am not come to dispute with you. You may attribute it to pride that I still ascribe piety to you. But when you left the Synagogue for ever, you must have seen beside a seat of prayer, where once your father stood, a child, and that child prayed fervently, and that child was yourself. Forget it not. And you may know and keep it in remembrance, that a Jew, with sorrow in his heart, sees you set forth on your lonely way. Farewell!"

Spinoza stretched out his hand to de Silva, but the latter only grasped that of the heretic with a mantle-covered hand, and went quickly away.

This new circumstance deeply agitated Spinoza. It was news from a life that he had lost; he could not be forgotten yet.

Soon, however, news of a death roused sincere sorrow, in Spinoza's heart. It was the news that his teacher, Van den Ende, was executed in Paris. . The always good-natured physician, who prized laughter as the highest good, had in action shown a devotion to his fatherland that no one would have expected from him. In order to prevent Louis XIV. from levying war on the United Provinces by a popular rising at home, he, with the Duc de Rohan and others, had plotted an insurrection in Normandy; he paid for it with a death on the gallows.

All the inhabitants of Amsterdam, indeed of the United Netherlands, gave a tender, and in some cases, remorseful thought to the departed. Many indeed maintained that the Doctor wished to enjoy

his greatest good wholesale; he wanted to laugh in chorus with all Europe at Louis XIV. driven hither and thither over the world's stage. But the undertaking of Van den Ende, and his self-sacrificing death, were too grave and impressive not to cut short such an explanation.

Spinoza tried to explain to himself this astonishing turn in his teacher's life. That a lightly living nature might also be a lightly dying one, is easily admissible; and even this neck-risking setting of his formerly squandered life on a single cast might be traceable to Van den Ende's character and theories. Still something remained inexplicable; Spinoza had mentally to excuse himself to his teacher; he had not expected so much from him.

He felt obliged to offer Olympia his condolences. In the expression of his grief and recognition of the bold deed must lie his reparation.

He examined himself severely, and felt he could say that only pure participation in the grief of his former love moved him to it; and in the evening he took the once familiar way to Van den

Ende's dwelling. The house was silent and deserted, and he learnt from a neighbour that Olympia had accompanied her husband to Hamburg. As he passed the Church of St. Olaves on his return, there, where he had once passed the night on the steps, and gazed at Olympia's window, some one rushed at him, seized him by the arm, and stabbing him in the breast with a dagger, ran swiftly away, saying, "the ass hath horns." Spinoza had luckily escaped the stroke, only his mantle was pierced, he thought he recognised the assassin—it was Chisdai.

When the first involuntary shock and its immediate effects on his mind had passed, Spinoza only reflected that fanaticism is nothing but a return to a primeval law of nature, which is apparently founded on laws of mind and on the sacredness of law. The confused hot-headed zeal which makes the internal law an external watch-word, has in all times cursed, crucified, burnt at the stake, and stabbed its enemies. It is worth while to reveal their innate laws to mankind, and lead them to love, and joy, and felicity. . . .



He kept the torn mantle as a reminder to do it.

Can we take this as a metaphor, that hatred and want of judgment only pierce the clothes of the wise, but cannot reach their inner self?

Spinoza did not hear that on the morning after the attempted crime a body was dragged from the Amstel. It was Chisdai's. He was buried unmourned as a suicide, like Uriel Acosta, whose grave he had insulted.

No news of the Jewish congregation reached Spinoza, and now he was prostrated by sickness.

Thy free thought hath raised thee aloft into the infinite, above isolated appearance thou dost hover in the knowledge of universal laws, then suddenly thou art overthrown in an obscure chamber, dead to the world, the mind shattered, extinguished the streaming light from the law of the universe. No dagger stroke of the hand of man had reached Spinoza's heart, and yet he felt inexpressible pain in his breast, and blood flowed from his mouth.

Was it the result of so many agitating events

following one after the other, and that infirmity which had already attacked him in early youth, and recurred on the occasion of his preaching in the Synagogue?"

Spinoza lay in sore sickness.

Now it was that Ludwig Meyer showed himself the faithful, helpful friend through day and night. And with his own gay humour he told his friend in quiet hours:

"Now you are what you ought to be, indeed more; you are a banished Jew and a bachelor. A bachelor can return again to that innocence of Paradise before woman was created, he stands alone and free; my original sin—you may laugh away—you will help me by it. Is it not of deep significance that, as soon as a second being speaks to Adam, he is no longer alone, he no longer acts merely for himself, he must accommodate his actions to another's; indeed, in the end he follows another's will; that is the fall, he did not act for himself, but for another. But the bachelor is like Adam in Paradise. You must remain the Adam of the mind."

Spinoza smiled at his friend and explained that man is not really free in solitude, but only in society. Ludwig Meyer often stood as if in prayer beside the bed of the Philosopher, who in painless moments looked upon his illness as a circumstance foreign to his real being. Only once he spoke of the trials he had gone through, and extended an idea he had expressed before:

"The heaviest burden that men can lay upon us, is not that they persecute us with their own hatred, ingratitude, and scorn; no, it is by planting hatred and scorn in our souls. That is what does not let us breathe freely, nor see clearly; it is vanity and self-destruction to hate a man; we must only try to make the wrong action unavailing, and thus again obtain the love of God, in which the world is so peaceful and happy, and which fills us at all times with joy."

He rose ever higher towards that serene height of contemplation, so that he might say of himself,—

"I have ever carefully striven with myself neither

to despise, nor to blame, nor to detest human actions, but to understand them; and likewise the human sensations of love, hatred, envy, avarice, and pity and the other motive powers of the soul to regard them not as faults, but as qualities of human nature, which belong to it as much as air, heat, cold, storm, thunder and the like are in the nature of the atmosphere; and which, if they are uncongenial, are yet necessary, and have their ascertained causes through which we try to apprehend their nature, and in whose contemplation the mind is as much entertained as in apprehending the things that are agreeable to the imagination."

Meyer could not abstain from plainly telling this investigator of truth his serious situation; for a short time, as if he already felt the sleep of death, Spinoza closed his eyes, while Meyer explained to him that his symptoms were unmistakeably those of consumption, and only careful and regular supervision of his life could lengthen his years. Silence reigned for a time, and Meyer watched the unmoved countenance of his friend, who still kept his eyes closed. Then the sick man arose, his eyes

shone brightly, no sound of pain, no complaint parted his lips; with the peace of perfected wisdom he decided on the rule of life which he would henceforward follow. And he stood erect while he declared that now, in reflection and self-knowledge alone, should his life be ordered, in self-control should his existence be maintained, and in peace of mind it should be fulfilled.

He kept his word.

When full of years to contemplate death, to leave the world of sight and sensation, this is hard, and yet we may comfort ourselves in that we have run through our allotted space. But in the bloom of years, before the mid-day of life, to feel the seed of death within us, to fight it day by day, to watch each evidence of life, to miss the habitual quiet conviction that life will go on of itself, with careful forethought to keep the duty of existence at all times before our eyes, and thus to rejoice gaily and innocently in the sunny day; to work vigorously, aroused by no appeal from without; to find in his own thoughts the sacredness of life and its joys,—that man alone is capable of this to whom

freedom and necessity, mortality and eternity, are one,—who in wisdom has mounted the highest peak of existence. For Wisdom is recognised harmony with Nature's laws; the fulfilment of duty, which, in recognition of and obedience to these, becomes inclination.

Such Wisdom was Spinoza's.

The world, with its thousand contradictions and inconsistencies in individual manifestations, was in his mind dissolved into harmony. He had thrown off all selfishness, all measurement of things in their influence on individuals; his own life and its trials were lost in the whole; and in enjoyment of the knowledge of divine Truth he lived the life eternal.

He was the free man who can dare to say,—

“I forbear from evil, or strive to forbear from it, because it is in direct opposition to my special nature, and would divide me from the love and knowledge of God, which is the highest good.”

In everlasting unalterable harmony, as the legend says of the Gods, and as Nature around is

unchangeable, lived Benedict Spinoza. What he had attained to by knowledge became to him blissful habit, and as he had once planned life in his thoughts, his thoughts now gave him life.

## EPILOGUE.

ONE night he saw a great vision; a man stood before him who was wonderful and strange to see. His head was covered with a broad hat, whose colour was as yellow as the grain beneath the sickle, and the hair of his head was white and flowed to his shoulders, on his brow was a sign of blood, his eyes lay hidden in their sockets overgrown with straggling hair; two furrows reached from them to the corners of his mouth—in them his tears had once streamed, but now they were empty, for the spring was dried up; his white lips were overgrown with hair that reached to his girdle; a hair shirt flapped round his meagre body, and his feet were naked and cut; at his right side hung a pouch, and there, also, his robe was covered with a patch of the colour of his hat; on his heart he carried a small roll in an iron case, fastened to



a cord which hung round his neck, and made a deep furrow in his flesh; in his right hand he held a staff which reached high above his head.

And the man bent over him, kissed him on the brow, and said:

“Knowest thou me well, O thou my son, in whom I am well pleased? Already more than six hundred times has the sun fulfilled its course, since the day when woe flowed over my head. I stood in my doorway and held my child in my arms, there they brought Jesus, son of Joseph and Mary of Nazareth, who called himself our Messiah; I hated him, for we loved the earth, and he showed us the heavens; we wished for a sword, and he taught us to love the foreign yoke; he was not our Messiah. When he would have rested on the threshold of my house, I spurned him with my foot, and thrust him away; but he said, ‘Come with me, thy foot which hath spurned me shall find no rest until the day when I return, and found my kingdom upon earth.’ The child fell from my arms, I followed him; I saw him die the death on the cross; I saw my house, I saw my children no more; they

were scattered like chaff before the wind, or were devoured by the sword. Unstable and unsettled as Cain I wandered through forest and field, over stream and mountain; the flowers closed their petals before my eyes, the grass withered if my feet approached it; the birds became mute in the air, and the hungry lion, roaring as he came near, recoiled in fright when he saw me. But the wild animals were merciful and kind, compared with those whom I regarded as of my race. I wandered through town and country; they drowned me with wormwood, and choked me with gall, they poured poison in my wounds, and made my bed on thorns; and when I would have laid down my head to rest, they made the ground tremble beneath me, and when I uplifted my complainings, they stopped my mouth with fiery embers. In every place to which I directed my footsteps, they seized me by the hair, collected wood in a pile, and thrust me into the flames; but Jehovah, the God of Israel, whose eternal Law I bore in my heart, sent his angel. And though the flames stretched out their devouring tongues towards me, He saved me; and though

they shed my blood in streams, He raised me, and animated me anew; and though they enveloped me in thick darkness, yet his light was kindled, and shone clearly around me; and though they buried me in mouldering graves, his breath blew on me, and breathed new life into me. Often I asked him, 'When will it end, O Lord? when wilt Thou have mercy on me? when wilt Thou hold me in kindness again before Thy countenance?' When wilt Thou pour balm into my wounds? when soften my torments? When wilt Thou let me find rest? When wilt Thou turn hatred into love, that I may cease to be an abomination, and the mark of scorn unto all nations? Why must I endure eternal dying without death, an eternal death without life? See, race after race have I seen fade and pass away like the grass of the field; kingdoms have I seen arise, and crumble to dust before the breath of Thy mouth. Everything rots and is brought forth anew, only I alone hang like the drops to a pail, that tremble in the wind, but do not fall. Where the bonds of ice hold the earth everlastingly chained, there I stood; and Arabia's hot sands

burned the soles of my feet; and nowhere, nowhere a land where I might sow or reap, or where I might find a grave. Jerusalem, the Glorious, lies in ruins, when wilt Thou rebuild her? When lead us back again? Look down! I say in the morning, would that it were eve; and in the evening, would that it were morn. Look down! Trouble is my companion, shame and sorrow are my playfellows, I have won love from them; give me tears, tears give me, that I may weep my misery; wilt Thou not, take then Thy hand from off me, let mine enemies pierce the core of my soul, let me die, let me die.—See, I have covered myself with hatred, let me take revenge on mine enemies, and ten times told over their heads what they have done unto me; speak to the thunder, that it may shatter them; command Thy lightning, that it may devour the marrow of their bones; or give me a sword, a sword give me, that I may bathe myself in their blood——Or will the time come, when Love and Faith shall meet, Justice and Peace kiss one another, Truth spring from the Earth, Justice look down from Heaven?’

"See, my son, such were my complainings, such was my despair, such my hope! Thou art come to be a Saviour to mankind, me too thou wilt save. Those who are of thy race have rejected thee, they have attempted thy life; those who are not of thy race have betrayed thee, they have embittered thy sweetest feelings; thou knowest no anger, thou rewardest them with the truth."

The vision bent again over the sleeper and kissed him; it was a kiss of the dying Ahasuerus, who bore on himself the doom of that Israel which slew Jesus Christ on the Cross.

Spinoza went to Rhynsberg, and from there to Voorburg and the Hague, and wrote the "Theologico-Political Tractate" and the "Ethics." There, alone and deserted, he ended his days. The five books of the "Ethics" came out after his death.

He died on February 21st, 1677, in his forty-fourth year.

No thinker, arisen since Spinoza, has lived so much in the eternal as he did.

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